DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 352 454 CE 062 512

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|---|---|
| AUTHOR | Ramsey, Kimberly; Robyn, Abby |
| TITLE | Preparing Adult Immigrants for Work: The Educational Response in Two Communities. |
| INSTITUTION | National Center for Research in Vocational Education, Berkeley, CA. |
| SPONS AGENCY | Office of Vocational and Adult Education (ED), Washington, DC. |
| PUB DATE | Nov 92 |
| CONTRACT | V051A80004-89A |
| NOTE | 77p. |
| AVAILABLE FROM | NCRVE Materials Distribution Service, 46 Horrabin Hall, Western Illinois University, Macomb, IL 61455 (order no. MDS-072: $5). |
| PUB TYPE | Reports - Research/Technical (143) |
| EDRS PRICE | MF01/PC04 Plus Postage. |
| DESCRIPTORS | Access to Education; Adult Students; *Adult Vocational Education; Case Studies; Educational Needs; *Educational Policy; *Educational Supply; *English (Second Language); *Immigrants; Limited English Speaking; Postsecondary Education |
| IDENTIFIERS | *California (Los Angeles); *Florida (Miami) |

ABSTRACT

Case studies examined how two communities--Miami and Los Angeles--with large immigrant populations had responded to the educational challenge posed by adult immigrants. Each case study had three components: interviews with education policymakers and practitioners, community leaders, and others; limited survey of adult immigrant students in the system; and focus groups with the students. Differences between the cities affected demand for and delivery of educational services. The service- and trade-based economy of Miami provided a narrower range of employment opportunities. Miami experienced waves of wealthy and then poorer immigrants, whereas Los Angeles had a single mass of poor immigrants. In Miami, immigration issues assumed a high profile; far fewer California policymakers saw immigration as a salient concern. Both cities relied on existing institutions to provide job training and made attempts to modify the traditional focus of many programs to address the critical immigrant issue of limited English proficiency. In adult schools, elementary English as a Second Language was provided as an open-entry/open-exit program. California's community colleges had the same policy, whereas Florida's required a high school diploma. Adult immigrants suggested some program improvements: flexible programs, integrated language and vocational education, more practice in classes and more individual attention. Challenges facing the policy community were: (1) demographics and (2) rethinking of institutional goals and missions. (Contains 76 references.) (YLB)

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# PREPARING ADULT IMMIGRANTS FOR WORK: THE EDUCATIONAL RESPONSE IN TWO COMMUNITIES

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# PREPARING ADULT IMMIGRANTS FOR WORK: THE EDUCATIONAL RESPONSE IN TWO COMMUNITIES

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Supported by
The Office of Vocational and Adult Education,
U.S. Department of Education

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**November, 1992** 4 **MDS-072**

CE062512

## FUNDING INFORMATION


| | |
|---|---|
| Project Title: | National Center for Research in Vocational Education |
| Grant Number: | V051A80004-89A |
| Act under which Funds Administered: | Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act<br>P.L. 98-524 |
| Source of Grant: | Office of Vocational and Adult Education<br>U.S. Department of Education<br>Washington, DC 20202 |
| Grantee: | The Regents of the University of California<br>National Center for Research in Vocational Education<br>1995 University Avenue, Suite 375<br>Berkeley, CA 94704 |
| Director: | Charles S. Benson |
| Percent of Total Grant Financed by Federal Money: | 100% |
| Dollar Amount of Federal Funds for Grant: | $5,744,000 |
| Disclaimer: | This publication was prepared pursuant to a grant with the Office of Vocational and Adult Education, U.S. Department of Education. Grantees undertaking such projects under government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their judgement in professional and technical matters. Points of view or opinions do not, therefore, necessarily represent official U.S. Department of Education position or policy. |
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## PREFACE

This Note documents a two-year exploratory study of adult immigrant students' English-language instruction and vocational education needs and the response of postsecondary education providers to those needs. It presents case study research of two communities with large immigrant populations. The case studies were undertaken to examine the policy context of burgeoning immigration and education. The findings provide insights into how and why educational services differ among schools and programs, and what difference that makes to adult immigrant students pursuing education. The descriptions of community responsiveness to the adult immigrant student should help educators and policymakers understand how program decisions and institutional traditions affect immigrants' opportunity to learn.

This study was conducted under the auspices of RAND's Program on Research on Immigration Policy and the National Center for Research on Vocational Education, and was funded by RAND.

## SUMMARY

During the 1980s, more immigrants entered the United States than at any time since the early 1900s. New immigration policies granted legal status to millions of immigrants already residing in the country and opened the door for large numbers of refugees to enter. The current wave of immigrants is entering the American labor force in record numbers, and it is projected to account for 25 percent of new workers by the end of the decade. Moreover, the current group of adult immigrants appears more likely than past groups to aspire to high-quality jobs and to seek the education and training needed to compete in the workplace. The needs and demands of this immigrant population pose a major challenge for the American adult education system.

This Note explores how schools and communities have responded to this challenge. The work presents case studies of two communities that contain large immigrant populations—Miami and Los Angeles. The Note is intended to:

- Describe the education and training system available to adult immigrants;
- Characterize school and community responses to immigrants; and
- Discuss the adult immigrant education issues currently confronting the education and policy communities.

### RESEARCH APPROACH

The research employs a case study approach. Each case study had three components: (1) interviews with education policymakers and practitioners, community leaders, and others; (2) a survey of adult immigrant students in the system; and (3) focus groups with the students. The work also draws on various secondary data sources to enrich our understanding of immigrant needs and the educational delivery structure.

Miami and Los Angeles were chosen as study sites because they best fit three criteria: (1) a dense immigrant population sufficient to exert significant demand on English-language and vocational instruction; (2) diversity in the immigrant population; and (3) a rich base of contacts and data supplied by prior RAND work in connection with the Immigration and Control Act.

## CONTRASTS IN ENVIRONMENT

### Economic and Demographic Contexts

Important differences between Miami and Los Angeles affect each community's demand for and delivery of educational services:

- **Economy.** The service- and trade-based economy of Miami provides a narrower range of employment opportunity than Los Angeles's diversified economy.
- **Immigrant population.** The immigrant population of Miami consists largely of refugees from the Caribbean and Latin American countries, who arrived in successive waves since the late 1950s. The first wave comprised a wealthy, middle-class group of Cubans; subsequent waves from Cuba and elsewhere have been less well-to-do. By contrast, the majority of the immigrant population in Los Angeles arrived illegally, tended to be lower class, and did not establish a strong base for services. Furthermore, the bulk of these immigrants were legalized by the immigration reforms of the 1980s, in effect joining the legalized populace in a single mass rather than successive waves.

### State and Local Policy Environment

Important variations in state and local policies also affect each community's ability to provide education and training to adult immigrants.

In Miami, immigration issues assume a high profile. Movers and shakers in local government have helped to create a powerful lobby for immigrant interests, which in turn has resulted in sustained—albeit limited—refugee assistance from the federal government. In addition, Miami has developed an economic program linking education and training providers with employers. The state has helped to foster these local policies by refraining from imposing obstacles to local policymakers and education providers who deal with adult immigrant concerns.

By contrast, many fewer California policymakers see immigration as a salient concern. Though many groups representing minority concerns wield considerable clout in state and local policy decisions, immigrants per se appear to have little input in the process. In the absence of effective lobbying for immigrant concerns, Los Angeles refugee services have traditionally been underfunded. To make matters worse, California imposes significant state-level funding limitations on education policymakers. Chronic deficits and competing interests have generally drawn federal assistance for immigrants away from education programs and into human services.

## SIMILAR EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS, DIFFERENT EMPHASES AND CONSTRAINTS

Miami and Los Angeles both rely on a wide range of existing institutions to provide job training. For immigrants, however, the key to program participation lies in the opportunity to obtain English as a second language (ESL) instruction in conjunction with vocational education. Both cities have made attempts to modify the traditional focus of many programs to address the critical immigrant issue of limited English proficiency (see Table S.1).

**Table S.1**

**System of Adult Education in Theory and Practice**

| Component | Traditional Focus | Current Operation |
|---|---|---|
| Public | | |
| Adult schools | Basic skills/ESL | Same |
| Skill centers | Short-term job training | + ESL |
| Occupational centers | Vocational certificate | + Adult school in LA only |
| Community colleges | Degree + transfer | + ESL, remedial |
| Private | | |
| Proprietary | Short-term job training | Same |
| Community-based organizations | Employability skills | + some ESL |
| Employers | Job-specific skills | Same |

However, these efforts follow fairly traditional models, adding or extending ESL programs at new sites, and including some limited experiments with integrating vocational vocabularies into ESL. Miami has also incorporated a heavily bilingual approach to vocational instruction. Few other new programs have been targeted specifically at immigrants (e.g., integration of ESL into vocational courses, job-related language laboratories, dual-language texts).

### Course Offerings and Support Services

In the adult schools, elementary ESL is provided as an open-entry/open-exit program with no restrictions and low fees, posing few barriers to students. The California community colleges also have an open-door policy, requiring no high school diploma for entrance, but many course requirements oblige students to take remedial English, math, or ESL courses. In the Los Angeles community colleges, little is offered in the way of elementary ESL. Students are expected to take lower-level courses through the adult schools. Fees in Los Angeles are quite low ($120 per year) and pose little problem, though immigrants, like most adult community college students, must sandwich education in with work.

Florida, on the other hand, requires a high school diploma for entry to community colleges, but the Miami community college system maintains an extensive noncredit ESL and

remedial program comprising almost 40 percent of the total enrollment. Fees at the Miami community colleges are much higher (about $920 per year), necessitating extensive financial assistance to students. Over a third of the students receive financial assistance, mostly in the form of grants and scholarships. The use of exit tests as a way to increase standards at community colleges and for longer vocational programs has caused a reduction in the number of students achieving degrees or vocational certificates.

In both communities, administrators bemoan a shortage of funds to give students adequate counseling about program options within their own institutions or at other institutions. Immigrants receive little guidance in making the transition from ESL to vocational programs.

### Coordination

The system of adult education is uncoordinated. There are gaps in articulation between programs and course duplication; moreover, providers compete for students and denigrate other components of the system. Particularly in Florida, an attempt has been made to develop a more coherent delivery system, but grandfather clauses in the agreement have weakened the effectiveness of the effort.

### Capacity and Resources

California's funding mechanism limits the expansion of the adult school system, despite a 40,000-student waiting list. The state caps annual growth at 2.5 percent for the adult schools, and it reimburses occupational centers in Los Angeles at the second-lowest rate in the state system. Because of their commitment to a traditional mission and because the state reimburses noncredit classes at half the rate of credit classes, the community colleges have been unable to expand ESL and remedial offerings or to initiate new programs. In Miami, administrators are satisfied with the state funding mechanism and have had adequate flexibility in responding to changing enrollment demands. Both communities report adequate capacity in their community college vocational programs.

At the community college level, persistence has been an ongoing problem. Miami administrators calculate that about a third of students graduate and typically require three to four years to complete the two-year course. Los Angeles administrators estimate that only a quarter of the students graduate, and their mean time to graduation is 4.2 years.

### Effect of the Immigration Reform and Control Act

The 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) has legalized over 2.5 million previously illegal aliens. The Act required legalization program applicants to demonstrate

proficiency in English and civics or satisfactory pursuit of such proficiency. State Legalization Impact Assistance Grants (SLIAG) were authorized to offset the burden on states of providing health, welfare, and educational services to the amnesty population. California, with about a third of the national total of amnesty applicants (1.6 million), received a SLIAG grant of $1.8 billion across five years. California directed its funds primarily at medical entitlement programs, allocating 20 percent of the grant to education programs. Still, this onetime infusion of federal funds doubled the state's ESL capacity. Los Angeles served more than 450,000 amnesty applicants in ESL classes. When funds end in 1992, the state expects to be able to support only 15 percent of the expanded capacity. IRCA brought short-term benefits to education but was insufficient to develop English proficiency in the amnesty population. Neither did the Act permit the use of SLIAG funds for vocational training.

## ENHANCING SERVICE DELIVERY: THE VIEWS OF ADULT IMMIGRANTS

In addition to exploring the range of adult immigrant educational services, the study also solicited the views of adult immigrants themselves on their educational aspirations and how effectively existing programs served them. They suggested a number of program improvements:

- **Flexible programs.** Because adult immigrants who seek job training tend to be older, working students, they expressed a need for evening courses and more flexible class scheduling.
- **Integrated language and vocational education.** Many students recommended language training directly associated with a job.
- **More practice in classes and more individual attention.** The large ESL classes prevalent in adult education make it difficult to offer quality learning opportunities.

## POLICY ISSUES

Several challenges face the policy community as it wrestles with the enormous task of educating adult immigrants and equipping them to succeed in an increasingly competitive and high-tech workplace.

### Demographic Challenge

By the end of the century, immigrants are expected to constitute 25 percent of all new U.S. workers. Clearly, addressing the educational needs of so large a segment of the

workforce constitutes a fundamental national concern. Currently, immigrants' needs compete with those of other disadvantaged groups: the hard-core unemployed, teenagers, and underprepared minority citizens. Education itself competes with other national priorities. This competition for resources threatens to limit the educational aspirations of immigrants, which in turn may limit our national ability to compete and prosper.

### Rethinking Institutional Goals and Missions

Educational institutions are struggling to mesh their traditional goals and missions with the needs of a changing population. However, these ad hoc adjustments too often result in duplication of services, conflicting goals, poor coordination, and a breakdown of curricular sequence. A fresh approach is needed. Systemwide goals need to be re-examined and a new mission articulated. The result should be a well-coordinated system that addresses language education and vocational training needs at all levels and provides smooth transitions between institutions.

**Integrating ESL and vocational education.** Fundamental to this response is treating English as a job skill rather than an academic subject or a prerequisite for job training.

**Expanding funding.** Current funding strategies reflect the low priority of adult education. A central problem in this area results from the fact that immigrants arrive as a result of federal policy but demand services from the states and, increasingly, local communities. Constricted federal funds are especially difficult for magnet states—such as Florida and California—that already face budget shortfalls. California's lack of emphasis on adult immigrant education is also reflected in its long-term budget cap on reimbursement for adult students. Addressing these issues may involve rethinking funding levels for various components of the educational system.

**Collecting information for planning.** Rethinking these issues and planning reforms will require far more accurate information than is now available in such areas as course-taking behavior, retention rates, tracking of subsequent education, job placement and retention rates, and institutional costs. This information will help us understand the patterns of student use of the system, persistence and attrition, remedial needs, cost-effectiveness, and the match between the system and workplace needs. How we invest in our national workforce dictates in great part the future quality of life for all Americans.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The research reported here would not have been possible without the gracious cooperation of school and district officials, government agencies, and many private citizens who openly shared their perceptions about programs serving adult immigrant students. We give special thanks to the many adult immigrant students who patiently shared their personal stories. Our RAND colleagues, Maryann Jacobi and Georges Vernez, reviewed an earlier draft of this Note and offered many helpful suggestions. We are also appreciative of the skillful editing provided by David Adamson and Joyce Peterson. Valerie Doby and Elaine Wagner provided outstanding secretarial support in producing an accurate text.

## CONTENTS

PREFACE ..... iii

SUMMARY ..... v

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ..... xi

TABLES ..... xv

Section

1. INTRODUCTION ..... 1
   - The Adult Education Challenge Posed by the New Immigration ..... 1
   - Background: Immigration Reforms of the Last Decade ..... 1
   - Characteristics of the New Immigrants ..... 3
   - Purpose ..... 5
   - Organization ..... 5

2. RESEARCH APPROACH ..... 6
   - Research Strategy ..... 6
   - Selection of Sites for Case Studies ..... 6
   - Selection of Students and of Focus Groups ..... 9
   - Scope and Limitations ..... 12

3. THE POLICY CONTEXT FOR RESPONDING TO ADULT IMMIGRANTS ..... 14
   - Demographic and Economic Context ..... 14
   - Local and State Policy Environment ..... 16

4. EDUCATIONAL RESPONSES ..... 21
   - Overall Education Strategies ..... 21
   - Structure of the Delivery System ..... 21
   - Support for Educational Institutions ..... 27
   - Response to the Immigrant Population ..... 31

5. ENHANCING SERVICE DELIVERY: THE VIEWS OF ADULT IMMIGRANTS . 48

6. DISCUSSION ..... 51
   - The Demographic Challenge ..... 52
   - Institutional and Regulatory Concerns ..... 53

BIBLIOGRAPHY ..... 59

## TABLES


S.1. System of Adult Education in Theory and Practice ..... vii
2.1. Sample of Education Providers ..... 7
2.2. Structured Individual Interview Sample, by Informant Type ..... 8
2.3. Survey Sample, by Course Type ..... 10
2.4. Characteristics of Survey Respondents ..... 11
2.5. Focus Groups, by Provider ..... 11
4.1. Postsecondary Education in Los Angeles and Miami: Who Provides What ..... 22
4.2. Enrollment, 1990–1991 ..... 24
4.3. Los Angeles Adult Schools Enrollment Trends ..... 25
4.4. Los Angeles Community College District Enrollment Trends ..... 25
4.5. Miami Adult School Enrollment Trends ..... 26
4.6. Miami-Dade Community College District Enrollment Trends ..... 27
4.7. State ADA Reimbursement per FTE Student, 1990 ..... 29

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## THE ADULT EDUCATION CHALLENGE POSED BY THE NEW IMMIGRATION

First-generation immigrants to the United States traditionally have demanded little formal education or job training specifically adapted to their requirements. Instead, they have generally settled for low-skilled jobs and have aspired for their children to experience full educational and occupational mobility. However, the newest wave of immigrants—many legalized by the sweeping immigration reforms of the 1980s and 1990s—may be less content simply to make things better for the second generation. These immigrants are much more likely to enter the system of adult education and seek skills to compete for higher-paying jobs.

Immigrants constitute a growing proportion of the American labor force. Whereas immigrant men and women made up 7 percent of the labor force in 1985, they are projected to comprise 25 percent of net new workers in 2000 (U.S. Department of Labor, 1989). In California, immigrants now account for half of the state's annual workforce increase of about 350,000 (Bouvier, 1988). Legal status for amnesty recipients and refugees is likely to encourage them to seek more skilled and higher-paying jobs and to address English-language deficiencies that limit earning capacity and occupational mobility (e.g., McManus, 1985; Smith, forthcoming).

Employers, relying increasingly on immigrant workers, are also expressing concerns about employees who cannot read or speak English well enough to operate machinery, communicate with co-workers and customers, or understand safety procedures (Stevenson, 1988; Eurich, 1990). Economic demands on employers also provide more incentive for society to encourage a better trained, and hence more productive, workforce.

How is the education system responding to this challenge? This Note explores the response in two communities with large immigrant populations: Miami and Los Angeles.

## BACKGROUND: IMMIGRATION REFORMS OF THE LAST DECADE

New immigration policies in the 1980s and early 1990s substantially increased the U.S immigrant population. We describe them below.

**The Refugee Act of 1980** broadened the definition of "refugees," increasing the number of refugee/asylee admissions to the United States. At the same time, the federal government provided steadily decreasing funds for refugee services.[1]

In the 1980s, refugee/asylee admissions were more than double the average for each of the previous three decades. Though refugee flows are targeted at 50,000 a year, the target was exceeded in all but one year in the 1980s. Admissions were composed primarily of East Asians (most reacting to the fall of the Vietnamese government) and Cuban and Haitian entrants. Asylee applicants from Latin America (Cuba, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Nicaragua) grew from just under 6000 in 1985 to an average of 50,000 in 1988–1990, dominating asylee immigration. From the few thousand applications the INS had received previous to the 1980 Act, applications went as high as 101,679 in 1989 (INS 1990).

Under the Act, federal monies are available to assist states and counties that serve refugees and asylees who require financial and service support and meet state income and resource tests. However, in recent years federal funding has declined. When the 1980 Refugee Act was first adopted, states were eligible for reimbursement of the first three years of refugee assistance. Beginning in 1983, the federal guarantee of 100 percent reimbursement for 36 months of refugee assistance underwent a precipitous cut: first to 24 months, then to 18, and finally to 12 months by 1989. During this same period, refugee admissions increased from a yearly average of 60,000 in 1984–1987 to 80,382 in 1988 and 101,072 in 1989.[2] The other source of funds for refugee services—the Refugee Demonstration Project, providing education and job search services—was cut by more than 50 percent between 1988 and 1990. Dwindling federal reimbursement shifts the financial burden of resettlement to states and communities.

**The 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA)** provided legal status to undocumented persons residing in the United States prior to January 1, 1982 (legalization applicants) or those employed in seasonal agricultural work for a minimum period of time (special agricultural workers or SAW applicants). It approved close to 3 million immigrant applicants and introduced well over a million adults to the education system.

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[1]The Act defines a refugee as any person who is outside her or his country of nationality and who is unable or unwilling to return to that country because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution (*1988 Statistical Yearbook of the INS*). Procedurally this means that a person intending to immigrate to the United States as a refugee is processed and approved by overseas immigration officers. The Act also provides statutory recognition for persons seeking asylum in the United States; an asylee is a person who bypasses immigration officers overseas and seeks legal adjustment at a U.S. port of entry or in the United States, on the basis of a well-founded fear of persecution upon return to their home country.

[2]*1989 Statistical Yearbook of the INS* .

The law requires that legalization applicants for permanent residency demonstrate a "minimal understanding of ordinary English and a knowledge of the history and government of the United States," or satisfactory pursuit of such knowledge. Congress provided funds to states in the form of State Legalization Impact Assistance Grants (SLIAG) to ease the financial burden of serving this previously undocumented population with education, public assistance, and health services.

**The Immigration Act of 1990** increased the number of immigrants allowed into the country. In federal fiscal 1992–1994, a total of 700,000 visas (up from 540,000) will be available each year; for federal fiscal 1995 and beyond, 675,000 visas are available yearly. This will boost legal immigration by 40 percent in 1992. Refugees and asylees come under a different law and are not included in these numerical ceilings, but specific provisions are made for temporary safe haven for Salvadorans and others seeking refuge from civil strife. Of particular importance to educators is not only the influx of Salvadorans but the temporary stay of deportation and work authorization to admissible spouses and unmarried children of legalized aliens (given amnesty under IRCA) who entered the United States prior to May 5, 1988. This latter provision legalizes a potentially large group of immigrants with demographics and education needs similar to those granted amnesty under IRCA and hence likely to avail themselves of English-language and vocational instruction. (National Immigration Law Center, 1990).

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE NEW IMMIGRANTS

Immigration in the 1980s accounted for 7.3 million new permanent residents—an average annual rate of 2.7 immigrants per thousand U.S residents.[3] America has not experienced such high immigration numbers since the first decade of the 1900s.[4] In 1989 alone, over 1 million immigrants were admitted for permanent legal status. In the pipeline for permanent legal status are another 110,000 refugees who arrived in 1990 and several million legalization and SAW applicants. Heavy immigration is likely to continue for some time, given refugee policy, IRCA provisions, and the newly passed Immigration Act of 1990.

The profile of this new immigration is distinctive in several ways, described below.

**Diverse origins.** Unlike immigrants in the first decade of the century who came primarily from Europe (92 percent), immigrants in the last decade come primarily from Latin

[3]Immigration statistics in this section are taken from the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, *Statistical Yearbook of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, 1990*, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1991, unless otherwise noted.

[4]According to the *1989 Statistical Yearbook of the INS*, admissions totaled 8.8 million in 1900–1910, with an annual rate four times as great as the present annual rate.

America (41 percent) and Asia (37 percent) and include a much smaller European cohort (10 percent). From 1985 to 1990, over half (55.7 percent) of immigrant admissions came from North American countries. Contributing to the enormous North American admissions are over three million undocumented persons who applied for amnesty under IRCA.[5] For IRCA applicants, Mexico led, with a full two-thirds of all applicants (over 2.2 million). About three-quarters of refugee arrivals in the period 1985–1990 entered from the Soviet Union (114,033), Vietnam (131,486), Laos (67,367), and Cambodia (34,811). The ebb and flow from sending countries is highly variable, although the decade-long trend indicates a stable high flow from Latin America.

**New locations for residence.** Over the century, the concentration of immigrant centers has shifted from the northeast to western and southern locales. Immigration is an urban phenomenon involving magnet centers: Los Angeles-Long Beach, New York City, Chicago, Anaheim-Santa Ana, Houston, and Miami. In particular, six states—California, New York, Texas, Illinois, Florida, and New Jersey—have led as sites of intended immigrant residence since 1971. California is especially notable since it has been the leading state of immigrant residence since 1976 and, in 1990, boasted some 56 percent of legalization immigrants and 28 percent of other immigrant classifications.

**Working-aged.** The majority of recent immigrants, like their earlier counterparts, are at the prime of their working lives. While median age for the total U.S. population is 31.5 years for males and 33.8 years for females, immigrants tend to be younger. Immigrants in general are concentrated in the 20–34 age band, and the median age of legalization applicants is 29. All classes of immigrants are only slightly more male than female.

**Often low-skilled.** One-half of immigrants report having an occupation at arrival. Though occupations are spread across a full range of fields, over half of the reported occupations are in services or unskilled labor. Among amnesty applicants alone, 68 percent are laborers or service workers.[6] Legalization applicants' most frequent occupations are operator, fabricator, or laborer (24.3 percent) and service occupations (21.4 percent).

This demographic profile of recent immigrants suggests a real challenge for educators. Ethnically diverse groups, often with a language and culture different from the majority of U.S. citizens, may need a host of instructional programs—e.g., English instruction, literacy training, adult basic education, citizenship instruction, vocational education, and job

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[5]As of July 1991, 2.5 million applicants have been approved for temporary residency (*Immigrants' Rights Update*, Vol. 5, No. 6, August 23, 1991.)

[6]Special agricultural workers (SAWs) are included in this accounting (United States Immigration and Naturalization Service, *Provisional Legalization Application Statistics*, May 12, 1989).

training—to integrate into American society and participate in the labor force. The concentration of immigrants in a few urban centers puts additional stress on communities whose educational systems already suffer from fiscal constraints. Low skills put their substantial contribution to the labor force at odds with an increasingly technical workplace wrestling to overcome low productivity and meet global competition. If immigrants want to participate in a more complex workplace, they will need to make personal investments in education and training.

## PURPOSE

This Note examines how schools and communities have responded to the educational challenge posed by adult immigrants. The work presents case studies of two communities—Miami and Los Angeles—that contain large immigrant populations. The report is intended to

- Describe the education and training system available to adult immigrants;
- Characterize school and community responses to immigrants; and
- Discuss the adult immigrant education issues currently confronting the education and policy communities.

This research is fundamentally exploratory in nature. Its principal aim is to identify and define central policy issues for further discussion and inquiry.

## ORGANIZATION

Section 2 describes our research approach. Section 3 describes the Los Angeles and Miami communities and their differing policy contexts for serving immigrants. Section 4 reports what we learned from the case studies of Los Angeles and Miami about school and community responsiveness. The views of immigrant students we surveyed about enhancing educational opportunities are reported in Section 5. In Section 6 we discuss the main issues confronting educators and policymakers.

## 2. RESEARCH APPROACH

### RESEARCH STRATEGY

There are three components to our case studies of the community responses in Miami and Los Angeles:

- Interviews with education policymakers and practitioners, community leaders, and others;
- A limited survey of adult immigrant students in the system; and
- Focus groups with the students.

### SELECTION OF SITES FOR CASE STUDIES

Communities were selected based on three criteria: (1) immigrant density sufficient to exert considerable demand on English-language instruction and vocational training providers; (2) variation in the immigrant population and vocational education delivery system; and (3) sites offering a rich base of contacts and data supplied by previous RAND studies in connection with the Immigration Reform and Control Act.[1]

Los Angeles and Miami best fit the study criteria. Both are immigrant-dense, and their immigrant populations vary by country of origin and immigration status. Los Angeles immigrants are largely Hispanic, but the immigrant population also includes substantial groups of Asian-Pacifics, Russians, Iranians, and Armenians; its recent immigrants are primarily amnesty applicants or undocumented persons. In contrast, Miami's immigrant population is largely refugee and Cuban, with immigrants from the Caribbean and Central America and a small proportion of amnesty recipients.

#### Selection of Education Providers and Respondents

We identified seven categories of education and training provider: public adult education schools, public vocational-technical centers, public job skills centers, community colleges, nonprofit community-based agencies, proprietary or for-profit schools, and employers.

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[1]Under the Program for Research on Immigration Policy, RAND and the Urban Institute conducted IRCA-related studies in Los Angeles, San Jose, El Paso, San Antonio, Houston, Miami, Chicago, and New York. See, for example, Baker (1990), Fix and Hill (1990), and Rolph and Robyn (1990).

Providers were selected based on their geographic location within areas where large numbers of immigrants reside. Our goal was to examine the education and training opportunities available to residents in their local area. To identify high-immigrant areas within the two sites, we began with 1980 census tract data and, given the eight-year time lapse, confirmed immigrant density by telephone interviews with local government agencies, school districts, and community organizations such as United Way, refugee centers, chambers of commerce, etc. All of the public education and training providers located in the target areas were visited, plus a sample of nonpublic providers. Nonpublic providers in the target area were identified by government officials, practitioners, advocacy groups, and community representatives active in immigration concerns. Preference was given to sites visited in previous RAND fieldwork, affording us extensive background on program operations. Proprietary schools were extremely reluctant to participate in the study. Some were skeptical of our purposes, given that proprietary schools are under increased scrutiny from the press and government; others voiced concerns that our visits would disrupt operations. Twelve were identified and contacted, and four agreed to participate. We also had difficulty identifying employers providing training and willing to participate. Twenty were identified and contacted, and four agreed to interviews with administrators but not workers. We established a balanced sample of sites between the two communities, summarized in Table 2.1.

We approached our collection and reporting of data to ensure the confidentiality of all respondents, including administrators, teachers, and students. The schools and names of individuals with whom we spoke are not identified.

### Selection of Educators and Community Leaders

We collected information on job training, vocational education, and English instruction through structured interviews with administrators, counselors, and teachers at 24 provider

**Table 2.1**

**Sample of Education Providers**

| | Los Angeles | Miami |
|---|---|---|
| Total | 12 | 12 |
| Community college | 2 | 2 |
| Adult voc-tech center | 1 | 1 |
| Job skills center | 1 | 1 |
| Adult school | 2 | 2 |
| Community-based organization | 2 | 2 |
| Proprietary school | 2 | 2 |
| Employers | 2 | 2 |

sites. Researchers also obtained planning or coordination data from informants when available.

Over 160 structured individual interviews were conducted. (See Table 2.2 for a summary of the interview sample.) Interview protocols were developed for several informant categories, e.g., state policymaker, local agency policymaker, provider administrator, provider teacher/counselor, and general background informant. In some cases, follow-up telephone interviews supplemented data collected in the structured interviews. Structured interviews were conducted with individuals representing the following categories:

- **State policymakers.** State education agency leadership for community and adult education, amnesty education, and community colleges; state labor agency for job training; and state human services agency for refugee services.
- **Community policymakers and leadership.** Education policymakers for K–12/adult public schools and community colleges. Government agency leadership for refugee services, labor market information, and community employment and training agencies for JTPA and Private Industry Council (PIC) activities.
- **Local general background informants.** Newspaper reporter for adult education concerns, immigrant advocacy groups, community health and human services agencies, immigration lawyer, economic development organizations, employers, and employer groups.
- **Local education providers.** Administrator or principal, counselor or admissions officer, teachers, staff specifically hired to meet needs of immigrant students, and research staff, if available.

### Design of Survey Instruments

Interviews were designed to triangulate information on a number of topics by asking similar questions of several categories of respondents. The context of the interview was the total vocational education delivery system, with emphasis on features particularly targeted

**Table 2.2**

**Structured Individual Interview Sample, by Informant Type**

| Respondent Category | Los Angeles (N) | Miami (N) |
|---|---|---|
| Total | 84 | 80 |
| State policymaker | 9 | 5 |
| County/city policymaker | 5 | 10 |
| Local background | 10 | 5 |
| Local education providers | 60 | 60 |

toward or affecting immigrants. Specific topics covered in the interviews included the organization of the training delivery system; resources; coordination among components of the system; goals of various components; federal and state role in addressing immigrants; the effect of IRCA on adult vocational education; and various aspects of program operation such as course offerings, enrollment procedures, goals, use of bilingual instruction, innovative practices, support services, future instructional plans, barriers for immigrants, and perceptions of the match between existing programs and immigrant needs.

### Secondary Data Sources

Secondary data sources identified through previous fieldwork and by respondents were used to enrich our understanding of immigrant needs and the delivery structure. They include INS data, Los Angeles and Miami school district and community college data bases, state-sponsored surveys, county refugee data, county labor market data, education and training policy reviews (McDonnell and Zellman, forthcoming), and other published reports (e.g., Asian Pacific Research and Development Council, 1988; Rose Institute of State and Local Government, 1989a, b, c).

Each informant and agency was asked for information about and copies of data they collect or use for planning or decisionmaking, e.g., enrollment, course-taking behavior, course or program completion, and subsequent employment experience of graduates. We also requested policy documents, labor market information, state or local service plans, funding documents, regulations and rules, etc. We requested data and materials used both for general administration of the provider agency and for immigrant-targeted programs.

## SELECTION OF STUDENTS AND OF FOCUS GROUPS

### Student Survey

We surveyed immigrant students at 17 of the provider sites.[2] Nearly 500 adult immigrant students enrolled in English-language and vocational education classes participated (see Table 2.3). Within vocational education, we sampled classrooms from a range of industry groups; for English-language instruction, we sampled beginning, intermediate, and advanced courses. Survey questions were distributed to the classroom

[2]As a group, employers (comprising 4 of the 24 respondents) were reluctant to allow us time to survey or talk with workers and did not participate in the student survey or focus group discussions. Of the remaining 20 providers, three did not return questionnaires, despite repeat mailing of questionnaire packets and numerous telephone follow-up calls. The nonreturns were from one community-based organization, one voc-tech center, and one proprietary school.

**Table 2.3**

**Survey Sample, by Course Type**

| Course | Total (N) | Los Angeles (N) | Miami (N) |
|---|---|---|---|
| English | **314** | **176** | **128** |
| Beginning | 125 | 104 | 11 |
| Intermediate | 139 | 56 | 83 |
| Advanced | 50 | 16 | 34 |
| Vocational | **192** | **139** | **53** |
| Sales and service | 77 | 42 | 35 |
| Trade and industrial | 61 | 43 | 18 |
| Clerical | 50 | 50 | — |
| Health | 4 | 4 | — |
| Total | **506** | **315** | **181** |

teacher. Supplied with written instructions, teachers administered the survey. We collected survey data during the 1989 and 1990 Spring semesters.[3]

We developed a brief questionnaire to take into account students' limited language skills and to avoid imposing on instructional time. English and Spanish versions of the questionnaire were piloted with 33 volunteer students enrolled in a beginning/intermediate ESL-Amnesty Civics class in a Los Angeles-area adult school, not part of our sample; afterwards, minor adjustments to the questionnaire were made. The questionnaire was available in English, Mexican-Spanish, Cuban-Spanish, and Creole, the dominant languages in these educational settings.[4]

The two-page questionnaire contains questions on employment aspirations, educational aspirations, areas of needed general support, and areas of needed program improvement. We also asked for demographic information on age, gender, employment status, type of job currently held, country of birth, and year of arrival in the United States, summarized in Table 2.4.

### Student Focus Groups

To gain more detailed information, we held focus groups at ten of the sites, varying by provider type and geographic location (see Table 2.5). Focus group interviews were conducted within each provider category with an attempt to achieve balance among vocational and language-instruction programs. We were, however, unable to hold discussions in workplaces because employers indicated that work schedules would prevent gathering even a small number of workers for an hour discussion or completion of a survey.

[3]We collected student survey data during Spring semesters to ensure our access to students enrolled in both beginning and advanced coursework.

[4]We found that vocational students routinely used the English version of the questionnaire.

**Table 2.4**

**Characteristics of Survey Respondents**

| | Survey Respondents (N = 477) | |
|---|---|---|
| Country of birth (%)[a] | | |
| Mexico | 25 | (119) |
| Cuba | 12 | (57) |
| Other Caribbean | 3 | (15) |
| El Salvador, Nicaragua | 24 | (112) |
| Other Central American | 8 | (39) |
| South America | 12 | (56) |
| Vietnam, Philippines | 6 | (29) |
| Other Asia | 7 | (31) |
| Other | 4 | (18) |
| Total | 101 | (476) |
| Median Age | 27 | |
| Percent Female | 53 | |
| Year of arrival in U.S. (in %) | | |
| 1955–1978 | 15 | (73) |
| 1979–1987 | 39 | (188) |
| 1988–1991 | 42 | (199) |
| No data | 4 | (17) |
| Occupation (in %)[a] | | |
| Unskilled labor | 12 | (55) |
| Service | 13 | (60) |
| Skilled labor | 13 | (61) |
| Clerical | 10 | (47) |
| Professional/technical | 9 | (29) |
| None reported | 47 | (225) |

[a]Percentages do not add to 100 due to rounding off.

**Table 2.5**

**Focus Groups, by Provider**

| Provider Category | Los Angeles | Miami |
|---|---|---|
| Total | 5 | 5 |
| Community college | 1 | 1 |
| Adult voc-tech center | 1 | 1 |
| Job skills center | 1 | 0 |
| Adult school | 0 | 1 |
| Community-based organization | 1 | 1 |
| Proprietary school | 1 | 1 |

A total of 100 adult immigrant students participated in focus group discussions. Ten groups of immigrant students enrolled in job training or ESL courses engaged in a discussion led by the researchers. Students were invited by flyer and paid $5.00 for their participation. Each school was urged to encourage all interested immigrant students to participate, and all volunteers were accepted into the group. We initially included a translator in focus groups,

but students seemed more comfortable translating for each other; with the multiplicity of languages we encountered at a few sites and the variation in English proficiency, relying on participants was the most feasible procedure.

The focus group agenda was designed to explore areas not easily covered in a brief questionnaire. During an hour-long conversation, we discussed how students learned about the educational program, the hurdles they face as students and workers, their knowledge of and access to school and program services, and their opinions about bilingual education and English immersion. As students briefly introduced themselves, we were able to garner some demographic data.

The immigrant students in our sample represented 40 different countries, though the majority were from Spanish-speaking countries. Over 40 percent had arrived in the United States within the last three years, and over 50 percent were working while attending school. The sample was almost evenly divided between males and females.

## SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

Before turning to the study, it is important to note the methodologic limitations of our research. This study provides a sketch of adult immigrant students already in the education system. The choice to study students in the system reflects our limited resources, which could not encompass identifying and surveying potential students, and the assumption that characteristics of immigrants accessing education in the near future would not differ substantially from those currently in the system. We cannot, however, account for those who are not accessing education programs, whether due to undocumented status, lack of financial resources, family burdens, illiteracy, lack of interest, or any other factors that discourage adults from further education.

Our case studies, other researchers, and policymakers reveal that communities are aware of a potential pool of students from the population of undocumented adults. The 1990 Immigration Act promises legal status to many adults currently in the undocumented pool, and we expect they will seek language instruction and vocational education as did amnesty and refugee groups before them.

This study does represent a starting point from which to discuss what adult immigrants *who act on their aspirations* see as their education needs. We suspect that these perceived needs place tremendous pressure on schools to provide instruction while policy and limited resources constrain schools' ability to respond. Yet we caution the reader that the set of "perceived" needs for current students may not necessarily reveal what is needed to encourage the pool of nonstudents to make use of the education system.

Finally, this study does not purport to evaluate the quality of program offerings that we observed, though we do try to present the range of education opportunities available to immigrants.

## 3. THE POLICY CONTEXT FOR RESPONDING TO ADULT IMMIGRANTS

Although both Los Angeles and Miami are gateway cities for immigrants, each attracts a different group of immigrants and provides a different range of opportunities. Significant differences emerged in each community's view of immigrants and how to deal with them.

The communities differ in two important ways. First, an overwhelming portion of Los Angeles immigrants only recently gained legal status to residency and services through the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA), whereas the largest portion of Miami immigrants received legal status and services under federal refugee policy dating back to the 1960s. Second, state and local policy environments differ with respect to human services and adult education, and to the salience of immigrant issues. However, Los Angeles and Miami have similar postsecondary education systems, and both communities are subject to the same federal policy regarding immigrants and their legal status.

### DEMOGRAPHIC AND ECONOMIC CONTEXT

#### Miami

Miami-Dade, with a population of just over 1.8 million, has been admitting over 20,000 refugees and asylees a year since the mid-1980s and reports over 66,000 amnesty applicants (27,826 legalization and 38,966 SAWs) in 1989. An estimated influx of 125,000–175,000 Nicaraguans occurred in the late 1980s. Many of these are awaiting resolution of their asylee status.

As the "Capital of the Caribbean," Miami has a population that is predominantly Hispanic (43 percent), over two-thirds of whom are Cuban; the remainder is 37 percent Anglo (including native Anglos and non-Hispanic whites from the United States and Europe, who moved to Miami for retirement or business opportunities) and 19.3 percent Black (including African Americans, Haitians, and other non-Hispanic Black Caribbeans).[1]

Miami's economy is based on services and trade, each accounting for 27 percent of 1989 employment (The Beacon Council, 1990). Growing tourism captured $5.2 billion in 1988 and domestic and international banking boasted nearly $56.3 billion in deposits, but the economy is described by local and state policymakers as "troubled." The savings and loan crisis and Eastern Airlines' labor strife and bankruptcy only added to this mood.

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[1]Source: Metro-Dade Planning Research Division, 1985 data in *Miami Mosaic*, The Cuban American Policy Center, 1987.

Miami has experienced several waves of immigration. The Cuban exodus in the late 1950s to early 1960s brought an influx of political refugees to Miami. This first wave was an elite, wealthy, and middle-class group of well-educated professionals, politicians, and bureaucrats. A trickle of Cubans continued over the next 30 years, peaking twice with the Freedom Flights in 1965–1973 and the 1980 exodus of Mariel Cubans arriving by fishing boats. This later wave of Cubans was poorer and less educated than the earlier group.

Haitian immigration, although smaller in numbers, reflects the same pattern of middle-class settlement followed later by a generally poor and uneducated group of Haitians in 1980. Nicaraguan immigration also reflects the same pattern: wealthy, upper-middle-class, and educated individuals arrived in the early 1980s. By the mid-1980s the middle-class flow began, and in 1987–1989 lower classes began to arrive. Many Central Americans come to Miami with legal status as immigrants or refugees, having made their requests through a U.S. embassy in the sending country. Others come as visitors and then seek asylum. The pattern of immigration to Miami has established a strong base of advocates for newer and less-advantaged immigrants.

**Los Angeles**

The Los Angeles metropolitan area, the Ellis Island of the latter half of the century, is the leading area of intended residence for immigrants. It contains the largest population of applicants for legalization under IRCA, about 26 percent of the national total (802,763). In addition to amnesty recipients, about 10,000 refugee/asylees a year have been admitted in the last few years. While immigrants to Los Angeles are primarily Hispanic, there are also substantial populations from extremely diverse areas, including Korea, the Philippines, Japan, Laos, Vietnam, China, Russia, and Armenia. In the past twenty years, Los Angeles has undergone a major population shift from being predominantly Anglo (non-Hispanic white) to a new majority of Hispanics, Blacks, and Asians. Given the county population of 8,863,164 (U.S. Census), the sheer numbers of immigrants in Los Angeles make them a significant factor in the economy, and their cultural diversity presents particular challenges for educators.

Los Angeles has a large and extremely complex economy, estimated at close to $297 billion. As a gateway to the Pacific Rim, the county has become the second-largest customs district and second-largest banking center in the United States. During the last decade, Los Angeles has undergone "economic diversification," moving from a narrow economy involving aerospace, movies, and tourism to a broad economy of seven major industries: business and financial services, tourism, aerospace, international trade, apparel manufacturing, and

motion picture production (Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce, 1989). This diversity offers a potential range of job opportunities, from low-skill service and manufacturing to high-skill technology and professional occupations. But the current recession and contraction of military-related industries has tightened the job market and brought high unemployment to the area.

In contrast to Miami, immigrants to Los Angeles often arrived illegally, were frequently lower class, and did not establish a strong advocacy base to demand services. The amnesty recipients are employed, but usually at low-skill, low-wage jobs, and they generally have very limited proficiency in English and limited educational backgrounds.

The California Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) provides comprehensive assessment intake for amnesty applicants entering Amnesty Education. In February 1990, CASAS reported results of pre-enrollment appraisals of legalization and SAW applicant students, finding that 90 percent of students are not prepared for everyday functions such as using the telephone and following simple instructions. Moreover, the appraisal determined that 85 percent of the IRCA population would have difficulty with reading warning/safety signs or completing a job application. As one state education respondent put it, "The reality of the low functioning of this population is just beginning to be believed."

A California Community Colleges statewide survey of ESL students enrolled during spring 1989 found a generally low level of educational preparation of students in the community college ESL classroom: Among reporting students, nearly three-quarters reported less than a high school education (24 percent had completed 6 years or less of schooling, 47 percent had completed 7–12 years); 25 percent reported having completed some college (13–16+ years). Eleven percent reported having a diploma from a U.S. high school.

## LOCAL AND STATE POLICY ENVIRONMENT

### Miami

Immigration has a high profile among the movers and shakers in Miami-Dade government. The mayor's office and the county manager are involved with efforts to provide immigrants with services. Their press for results is evidenced by the special units that maintain communication with INS officials and lobby the Florida congressional delegation on immigration funding matters.

Convinced of the importance of numbers to back up their arguments, the County Manager's Intergovernmental Coordination unit produced two white papers (in 1985 and 1989) on the impact of immigration on Miami-Dade. According to local officials, these white papers provide the Florida congressional delegation and state policymakers with essential

data to press their case for federal funding and to request that the GAO examine local costs for providing assistance to refugees. Local and state policymakers agree that the joint effort from all levels of government has resulted in continued, although limited, refugee-targeted assistance monies to Florida. Miami policymakers are committed to lobbying the federal government to share in the costs associated with immigration.

**Refugee assistance.** During a year of initial targeted assistance provided by federal refugee funds, Miami-based refugees receive health, food, and housing assistance along with mandatory training—this is known as "front loading" assistance. The training is contracted through the local Service Delivery Area (SDA), which places each adult through intake assessment, located at sites throughout the city, resulting in an individual training plan aimed at employability. Because there is no state welfare in Florida, clients still requiring assistance after a year of refugee assistance are placed on AFDC when eligible. Essentially after the first year, refugees are no longer identified as such where services are concerned—and mainstreaming begins. For instance, the state's welfare-to-work program, Project Independence, reports having no immigrants or refugees, since "they are out of their refugee problem by the time they get here."

When IRCA was enacted, schools and hospitals used SLIAG funds to offset the resource depletion over multiple years of immigration. County workers explained that the city is urging "legal status" for anyone with unclear status, since it is their experience that people will not return home as long as conditions in the sending country have not improved.

**Government/business/education partnership.** Miami has an economic development program linking education and training with new employers. City Hall brokers the relationship. In 1986, voters approved an enterprise zone program, and the city selected an official economic development agency responsible for coordinating assistance to new employers, whether it be education assistance or technical business assistance provided by the city. There is no state statute standing in the way of using public funds for training the employees of a private employer.

Despite this interesting model, the city's effectiveness in attracting high-skill and higher-wage jobs is seemingly limited by other circumstances. Many firms are attracted to the low-wage immigrant labor force readily available in Miami. As a non-union state, Florida would seemingly offer fertile ground for large manufacturing. However, large manufacturers are in partnership with international labor unions, making even the largest firm anxious about alienating the union with which it must regularly negotiate in other parts of the country. Miami also has a reputation as a high-crime, drug-infested city, and employers might be frightened to relocate where the risks are so high.

Several local leaders and economists report their impression that the economic development agency is not really forecasting and targeting future employers, but is instead providing assistance opportunistically when an employer presents a new business idea. They complain that the agency lacks vision about the nature of immigrants and refugees, as people with "guts, who take chances, and who are appreciative of employment." They argue that if the agency understood its constituency, it would not be so quick to advertise low wage rates as an inducement to employers.

**State policy.** State policy and agencies provide few hurdles for local education providers serving adult immigrant students. Agencies providing human services and employment opportunities are focused on coordinating services for adults. They are now in the planning stages of a state-level committee that will develop a common intake form for adults wishing to access a variety of government services, e.g., medical services, job training, housing assistance, etc. While policymakers want to improve services, they also want to avoid development of a superagency. State education administration, however, is conspicuously absent from this state-level coordination effort.

### Los Angeles

Unlike those in Miami, only a few policymakers in Los Angeles include immigration as a salient concern for the programs they administer. In our discussions with local policymakers, few articulated a sense of "value" regarding immigration and immigrants or discussed immigrants' contribution to the city. For instance, a newly implemented school/industry/community partnership focusing on the education of the Los Angeles labor force and involving the major education providers, corporate interests, government leaders, and community leaders neglects to mention immigration or immigrant education as a citywide concern; moreover, its action committees do not have immigrant education on the agenda, since it is seen as a "special issue" that will be addressed after the partnership is established. Advocacy groups representing the Mexican, Central American, and Pacific Asian communities report that immigrants are "invisible" to city policymakers and agency administrators when they plan for the Los Angeles community.

For those policymakers who set their planning priorities with immigrants in mind, the need for English-language instruction and vocational education is clear. For instance, the Los Angeles County Private Industry Council (PIC) became aware of education needs of working adult legalization applicants while administering plant closure procedures required

by newly passed legislation.[2] Hispanic persons accounted for about 55 percent of displaced workers. During outplacement assessment, many of these workers were found to be monolingual in Spanish and lacking in basic skills. The PIC provided 100 hours of ESL instruction to these workers prior to the actual layoff.

This experience provided the impetus for the County's JTPA apparatus to lobby for a high-profile response to Hispanic legalization applicants. PIC staff designed a demonstration project—to be funded by federal JTPA funds joined with state Employment Training Panel monies—specifically earmarked for displaced workers. Although immigrant workers are able to access local training services, PIC staff argued that a targeted effort is needed to recover from the burden of layoffs within the Hispanic immigrant community.

**Underfunded refugee services.** During the last decade, Los Angeles County's refugee program experienced heavy budget cuts due to reductions in federal refugee targeted assistance. For example, targeted assistance funding per arrival dropped from $1362 in 1983 to $171 in 1988. For refugees receiving welfare assistance funding, the county reimbursement dropped from $135 in 1983 to $43 in 1988. Meanwhile, both arrival and recipient numbers have increased.

Los Angeles, lacking a lobbying effort similar to that put forth by the Florida congressional delegation, found itself running out of funds with little notice. In response to refugees' training needs, the state proposed placing refugees in the new welfare-to-work initiative called GAIN, where they would ostensibly receive training. Like Miami, Los Angeles frontloads refugee services with the goal of getting newcomers into the labor force within the first year of arrival. This fast track runs counter to the way GAIN implements training opportunities, which is stepwise—through basic skills first and then job training. Its targets are the long-term welfare recipient. GAIN proved a poor compromise for refugees living in Los Angeles, since the Los Angeles County program had a late and controversial start-up; one year after it took over responsibility for refugees, it had served a total of only 36 refugee clients. Immigrant access is also complicated by the companion federal welfare-to-work JOBS legislation, which targets teen mothers, dropout youth, and the hard-core unemployed.

**State funding obstacles.** California education policymakers and administrators for adult and vocational education support immigrant education, but find their hands tied by

[2]According to the PIC, 118 plant closure warnings occurred in Los Angeles County from March 1 to November 30, 1989. The Los Angeles County PIC's EDWAAA Rapid Response unit provides outplacement services for soon-to-be displaced workers. Los Angeles County accounted for 44 percent of all layoffs in California.

funding deficits. Funding education in California is a thorny proposition. The state education chief and the governor's office debate about education's fair share of the state budget, particularly special ballot initiatives to fund schools. Therefore, federal monies targeted for immigrants and providing discretionary language on the split between education and other human services, such as SLIAG funds, were frequently prioritized to cover human services first and then education. One state administrator summed up the funding problems as "a lesson in shortsightedness. We have turn-keyed an entire population—gave them the keys and now resources are needed." The IRCA potential of education for immigrants gave way to budgetary politics.

The distribution of federal JTPA funds to local PICs follows a similar path. Because the previous governor's office freely used its administrative role through the State Job Training Coordinating Council to set statewide priorities for job training, some local communities were unable to respond effectively to local needs. For example, Los Angeles City and County PICs wanted to move training in the direction of basic skills several years ago, but found it difficult to do so since statewide performance standards and incentives were aimed toward skills training. Essentially, when unemployment reached the 4–5 percent range, the hard-to-employ population requiring basic skills and employability training was the new JTPA client, but the state was in a different mode. Local PICs complain that this top-down approach is miscalculated and goes against the spirit of JTPA. This sort of funding process makes it difficult for educators to plan and coordinate resources strategically among providers.

The policy environments in Miami and Los Angeles go a long way to explain each community's commitment to providing education opportunities to its immigrant population. Whereas immigrants have a high profile in Miami, dominate local government, provide a strong lobby for federal and state support, immigrants in Los Angeles are invisible to local policymakers, cannot depend on ongoing federal funds, and are unable to focus state support.

## 4. EDUCATION RESPONSES

This section describes community and school responses to the educational needs of adult immigrants. In particular, we focus on responses to the two primary requirements: English instruction and vocational training. We highlight similarities and contrasts between Miami and Los Angeles. After briefly introducing the education strategies of the two communities, we describe the education and training systems, how the institutions are supported, and how they respond to immigrants. In this and the following section, descriptions and analyses sometimes apply to both communities and at other times require a comparison between the two. We highlight significant factors in the Miami and Los Angeles response to adult immigrants, drawing on a wealth of information provided by respondents.

### OVERALL EDUCATION STRATEGIES

- Both communities have relied on existing institutions to educate adult immigrants, though in many cases modifying their delivery systems. For the most part, these institutions have been adult education centers and community colleges.
- Only limited efforts have been made to target programs for adult immigrant students.
- Miami and Los Angeles differ in their relative reliance on various institutions and their level of commitment to educating adult immigrants. In general, the Miami educational community takes a greater interest in immigrant issues and has responded more flexibly than Los Angeles has.

### STRUCTURE OF THE DELIVERY SYSTEM

Adult public education providers in Los Angeles and Miami have a similar hierarchical structure for delivering occupational and language training programs (see Table 4.1). Students theoretically proceed through a sequence, acquiring ESL and secondary school skills at adult schools, short-term training at skills and occupational centers, and/or longer training at community colleges. At the base are adult schools concentrating on job readiness skills: adult basic education, English as a Second Language (ESL), citizenship, preparation for high school diploma, and very limited vocational courses (e.g., computer typing). Also administered through the adult school system, skills centers and occupational centers (also

**Table 4.1**

**Postsecondary Education in Los Angeles and Miami: Who Provides What**

| Component | Traditional Focus | Funding |
|---|---|---|
| Public | | |
| Adult school | Basic skills<br>Literacy<br>GED, ESL | State education funds,<br>Adult Education Act,<br>SLIAG (temp) |
| Skills centers (adult school system) | Short-term job training | State education funds,<br>JTPA, Perkins,<br>Welfare-to-work funds |
| Occupational centers (adult school system) | Vocational certificate | State education funds,<br>JTPA, Perkins |
| Community college | Liberal arts<br>Vocational education<br>Degree granting<br>Certificate<br>Remedial, ESL | State education funds,<br>Federal Higher Education Act, JTPA, SLIAG (temp) |
| Private | | |
| Proprietary schools | Short-term job training<br>Vocational certificate | Federal higher education tuition funds, JTPA |
| Community-based organization | Basic skills<br>Literacy<br>Employability skills<br>ESL | Private donors, grants, JTPA, SLIAG (temp), state rehabilitation funds, welfare-to-work funds |
| Employer | Job-specific skills | Company funds, state rehabilitation funds |

known as vocational-technical centers) offer a more complete form of vocational education; they differ from each other in program length and the type of employment expected for the graduate. Whereas skills center programs last about three months and promise minimum-wage employment, occupational centers have year-long programs culminating in above-minimum-wage employment. Community colleges offer two-year associate degrees and vocational certificates in vocational subjects leading to career-oriented employment, along with a substantial set of precollegiate studies, ESL, and remediation courses.

While the adult school administered systems have similar functions in both cities, Los Angeles and Miami community colleges have different missions. California community colleges have two main goals: providing academic preparation for students transferring to four-year colleges, and providing two-year vocational certificates. The changing

demographics of the surrounding communities, attrition rate, and falling enrollments compared to the early 1980s in Los Angeles signal to administrators that their potential clientele has needs that their programs are not meeting. They particularly mention flexible curricula, perhaps shorter course sequences, more convenient hours, and intensive support services. According to administrators, change is difficult to accomplish because it flies in the face of the California Master Plan for Higher Education and the presence of a largely tenured faculty that resists innovation in both course content and curriculum structure.

In contrast, Miami's public community colleges see a threefold mission for themselves: it includes the traditional goals of preparing transfer students for four-year colleges and offering vocational courses, but it also includes a firm commitment to serving the surrounding community through noncredit adult classes. In Miami, one of the largest ESL programs (serving over 3300 students each semester at a single site) is run by the Miami-Dade Community College (M-DCC) system through a center catering to its international community. The illiterate, non-college-bound are part of the center's target population. The community college system provides extensive credit and noncredit ESL programs. Three of the four campuses have ESL programs, and a fourth campus is establishing an ESL program with a grant from the community college system. The tradition of providing ESL goes back to the Cuban influx of the 1960s and has been a continually expanding program, particularly with the Mariel boatlift and the current Central American immigration.

Set apart from the public education providers of both communities are those in the private sector: community-based organizations (CBOs), proprietary schools, and employers. Community-based organizations are commonly nonprofit and provide advocacy for students as well as instruction. Although many CBOs do not have the expertise or infrastructure to provide direct instruction, they often provide intake and referral to an established provider. Proprietary schools are privately held job training schools focused on short-term job training (1–3 months) and vocational education (6–12 months). Employers are also a potential source of skills training, although many search for links to established educational providers to provide instruction to their workforce. Significant education and training activities go on in private businesses (e.g., see Eurich, 1990) but are primarily provided to those in the higher echelons of firms (Barron and Black, 1989; Office of Technology Assessment, 1990). Although the system is designed for adults to acquire basic skills in the adult schools and then various levels of job training through the other components, immigrants enter the system at every level regardless of their background, and are likely to need ESL and remedial coursework at whatever institution they attend.

### Enrollments and Capacity

Adult school and community college enrollments in Los Angeles and Miami indicate growing demand for ESL but differing capacities to meet the needs for noncredit (lower-level) ESL and differing emphasis on credit versus noncredit course offerings (see Table 4.2).

**Los Angeles.** Enrollment trends in the Los Angeles adult schools and community colleges reflect a growing demand for ESL (see Tables 4.3 and 4.4). Los Angeles has five times the population of Miami, but it only has twice as many students in the adult school system. About two-thirds of students are enrolled in ESL, indicating that at least that many are immigrants. In Miami, about a third of students enroll in ESL (see Table 4.2). Nonamnesty enrollment in the Los Angeles adult schools has increased since 1985, but has been accompanied by a long-term waiting list of over 40,000 adult school applicants, indicating greater demand than capacity for the noncredit ESL they provide. In response to IRCA's English and civics requirements, ESL instruction exploded. Special classes for amnesty applicants provided by the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) have enrolled over 450,000 students between 1987 and 1992. The average length of student attendance in an amnesty class in the first few years was 140 hours; it is currently 62 hours, considerably beyond the minimal 40 hours required by INS regulations and demonstrating a commitment to learning English beyond the essentially *pro forma* requirements of IRCA.

Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD) enrollments have been rising slowly for the last five years, but have not attained the level of the late 1970s or early 1980s. Enrollments declined 20 percent in the last decade from their highest level in 1981 (137,533), but ESL enrollment has practically doubled from 1986 to 1990, accounting for the recent total enrollment growth of some of the colleges and indicating a growing demand for ESL.

**Table 4.2**

**Enrollment, 1990–1991**

| | Los Angeles | Miami |
|---|---|---|
| Adult schools | 454,672 | 223,000 |
| Percent ESL | 67 | 30 |
| Waiting list | 40,000 | 0 |
| Community college | 115,160 | 118,000 |
| Credit | 110,690 | 72,000 |
| Noncredit | 4,470 | 46,000 |
| % ESL | 9 | 14 |
| % noncitizens | 21–22* | 33* |

*Estimated.

SOURCES: LAUSD, Division of Adult and Occupational Education, Fiscal Services Section; LACCD Educational Research and Development Division; Dade County Public Schools, M-DCC Center for Educational Research.

**Table 4.3**

**Los Angeles Adult Schools Enrollment Trends**

| | Total Enrollment | ESL | Amnesty | Total Excluding Amnesty |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1985 | 335,509 | 192,720 | 0 | 335,509 |
| 1986 | 379,406 | 208,520 | 0 | 379,406 |
| 1987 | 393,853 | 202,043 | 51,706 | 342,147 |
| 1988 | 602,243 | 201,177 | 267,311 | 334,932 |
| 1989 | 501,602 | 233,867 | 104,017 | 397,585 |
| 1990 | 454,672 | 240,429 | 47,458 | 407,214 |

SOURCE: LAUSD, Division of Adult and Occupational Education, Fiscal Services Section.

**Table 4.4**

**Los Angeles Community College District Enrollment Trends**

| | Total | ESL Credit | ESL Noncredit |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1985 | 91,779 | | |
| 1986 | 102,533 | 5,290 | 13 |
| 1987 | 102,209 | 5,791 | 160 |
| 1988 | 105,000 | 6,763 | 1,016 |
| 1989 | 108,228 | 8,233 | 2,612 |
| 1990 | 110,690 | 9,404 | 870 |

SOURCES: *Annual Information Digest, Los Angeles Community Colleges 1989–1990*, Educational Research and Development Division, Los Angeles Community College District, Los Angeles, CA, May 1991; Jesus M. Garcia, *English as a Second Language Instruction in the Los Angeles Community College District (Fall 1980 –Fall 1988)*, Educational Research and Development Division, Los Angeles Community College District, Los Angeles, CA, Fall 1989.

LACCD maintains a very limited noncredit ESL program because of a 1976 Delineation of Functions Agreement between the adult schools and the community colleges, which relegated noncredit ESL to adult schools. With the demand pressures for amnesty classes, the door was opened for community colleges to embark on an expansion of their noncredit ESL programs to meet the needs of amnesty applicants. However, this was viewed as a temporary program—most of the classes are being closed, and no long-term expanded capacity for noncredit ESL instruction was established. Several factors affect the expansion of ESL offerings: First, as discussed earlier, noncredit courses do not meet the community college mission. Second, institutional changes are hard to accomplish even if sought because LACC has a high proportion of tenured faculty (99 percent). Faculty are tenured by department and shifting is difficult. Moreover, the financial structure does not encourage noncredit courses.

In a study on ESL enrollment trends conducted for the community college district (Garcia, 1989), it was found that "English as a Second Language instruction is a program

that is in great demand in the Los Angeles region, yet to date the LACCD has failed to provide for this need." That study's conclusions were based on projections from the number of limited-English-proficient (LEP) 12th graders in the area served by the district, census figures on the adult non-English-speaking population, and analyses of the ESL course enrollments by college in proportion to the ESL enrollments systemwide generated by the population living in each college area.

**Miami.** The lack of waiting lists in Miami adult schools and community colleges and reports by respondents indicate adequate capacity to meet immigrant needs (see Table 4.2). ESL enrollment in Miami adult schools has remained fairly stable in recent years, with no waiting lists (see Table 4.5). Because of the more limited amnesty population in Miami, IRCA had a smaller impact. Most schools reported temporary expansion of their services, as had occurred with the Mariel entrants, but no long-term impact on their program operations. As in Los Angeles, students attend amnesty classes for more than the 40 hours minimum, but unlike Los Angeles, Miami adult schools tied receipt of a certificate of satisfactory pursuit of amnesty studies to a specific level of achievement rather than a formal fulfillment of the 40-hour minimum requirement. Students average 90 hours of attendance to attain this certificate.

Miami has the largest community college system in the nation, and this system is more likely to be the point of entry for education than the one in Los Angeles. Fourteen percent of its 1990–1991 enrollment is in ESL. Noncredit ESL in the M-DCCs began when a state mandate accompanying a new state placement test created concerns over credit and noncredit courses. The ESL program as a whole has grown during the last five years, reflecting increasing demand (see Table 4.6). Miami's ESL infrastructure, aided by federal refugee funds, provides great advantages to the M-DCC system, allowing it to expand and adapt to changing needs.

**Vocational education capacity.** The capacity for vocational training in both cities appears to be adequate in the community colleges, but in Los Angeles the adult school

**Table 4.5**

**Miami Adult School Enrollment Trends**

| | Total Enrollment | ESL | Amnesty[a] |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1986–87 | 144,543 | NA | NA |
| 1987–88 | 155,881 | NA | 7,045 |
| 1988–89 | 175,594 | 47,899 | 13,647 |
| 1989–90 | 189,128 | 48,207 | 11,895 |
| 1990–91 | 223,214 | 48,067 | 10,819 |

SOURCE: Dade County Public School District (DCPS), Office of Adult Education.
[a]Counts provided by the INS to DCPS.

**Table 4.6**

**Miami-Dade Community College District Enrollment Trends**

| | Total Course Credits[a] | Degree ESL Course Credits[a] | Nondegree ESL Course Credits[a] |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1985 | 907,934 | 95,174 | 0 |
| 1986 | 935,232 | 99,169 | 0 |
| 1987 | 982,008 | 74,530 | 28,536 |
| 1988 | 1,043,791 | 78,609 | 30,108 |
| 1989 | 1,110,653 | 93,085 | 33,384 |
| 1990 | 1,193,051 | 102,451 | 34,047 |

SOURCE: Center for Educational Research, Miami Dade Community College.

[a]These figures represent course credits, not enrollment figures. M-DCCD was unable to break out enrollment figures into these categories.

occupational center suffers from the same limitations as the other adult schools. In the immigrant-dense downtown center, half of the classes are closed and can accommodate no more students. There are waiting lists of 10–25 for classes. Usually students need to wait a semester to get into a class. Miami occupational centers do not report waiting lists, except in the health fields with particularly popular courses such as nursing or dental technician.

## SUPPORT FOR EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Funding for adult language training and vocational education comes from a variety of state and federal sources, as shown in Table 4.1. The basic source of adult public education funds is from state allocations based on average daily attendance (ADA) reported by the adult schools and community colleges. The state allocation is not a strict entitlement, since the rate of system expansion is set by the state. The limited capacity of the adult schools in Los Angeles is a direct reflection of the state funding strategy, which caps expansion at a 2.5 percent increase in ADA per year.

Although the Los Angeles Unified School District has served over 400,000 amnesty applicants in language and civics classes, this tremendous expansion of services resulted from the temporary infusion of federal SLIAG funds (see discussion below).

The continuing waiting list of 40,000 students reported by LAUSD reflects the limited ability of the Los Angeles system to respond to population demands. Schools circumvent the cap on expansion by increasing class size. As a result, the downtown adult education school, serving about 10,000 students, 95 percent of whom are immigrants, has ESL classes of over 40 people (limited only by fire marshal restrictions). The district adult schools as a whole are 4000 over cap. The picture is exacerbated by the low level of reimbursement for adult school students in Los Angeles, $1585 per full-time equivalent (FTE) as opposed to $1766 per FTE received in Miami.

Like the adult schools, the Los Angeles occupational centers (administered by the adult school system but part of a statewide system) are limited by a state funding structure that is insensitive to changing demand. Funding for the occupational centers comes from the state on a sliding reimbursement scale pegged to the proportion of high school students served. Los Angeles receives the second-lowest reimbursement ($1981), on a scale ranging from $1700–$4500, because so many of its students are adults. Consequently, the program is underfunded and the district borrows funds from the already severely constrained adult schools to help support it. The low level of funding creates course waiting lists and impedes program expansion, technology updating, and providing adequate support services for students.

A report written by the California Postsecondary Education Commission in 1988 recommends a funding strategy that is more flexible and responsive to local needs, but this recommendation has yet to be implemented, in part because of budgetary politics,[1] and also because of the limited recognition of the needs of students not pursuing postsecondary education at four-year colleges.

In contrast, the Dade County Public School system is able to adjust its language and vocational capacity to enrollment demand through a state funding mechanism providing additional funds for enrollment increases of 5 percent that persist over three years. In the interim, increasing enrollments have been handled by raising class size from 21 to 25 students.

In both communities, community colleges teach ESL at advanced levels as courses applicable to degrees (though not replacing English requirements), and at lower levels as noncredit courses. In Miami the primary category of nondegree-eligible ESL courses is treated fiscally as if it were credit and charged to the state at the same rate as the credit ESL, making it feasible for the college to offer these classes and to shift faculty between credit and noncredit ESL. In California, the state's ESL reimbursement is lower for the noncredit courses than for credit courses. Reimbursement in California is at 50 percent for noncredit courses (see Table 4.7). The differentials in reimbursement make it difficult for Los Angeles administrators to afford these classes or to shift faculty from credit courses to meet changing demand. ESL has a lower priority in the Los Angeles community college system than in Miami. In Los Angeles a full-time position teaches 15 units, whereas an academic full-time position teaches only 12 units. The ESL faculty is 94 percent part time,

[1]Conditions have been changing since the election of a new administration in California; however, the state's severe budget crisis has curtailed expansion of educational services.

providing flexibility but detracting from the stability and long-range planning capability of the program.

The disparity between credit and noncredit course reimbursement is not as great in Miami (see Table 4.7), and Miami colleges have more flexibility in hiring staff. They also use part-time staff, but not nearly to the extent of the LACCD; less than 50 percent of noncredit ESL staff is part time. They have been able to meet enrollment demands in the past but are concerned about being able to afford continuing expansion if the state undergoes projected budget cuts.

It is apparent that differing funding environments in Florida and California have affected the capacities and responsiveness of the two systems. The steady influx of federal refugee funds has allowed Miami to build a stable capacity for ESL supported by a flexible state funding mechanism. California, with its low refugee/high SLIAG funding base, lacks a stable financial base for ESL and flexible support for adult education. When resources are available, Los Angeles has responded astonishingly well, quickly doubling its ESL capacity with SLIAG funds.

### SLIAG Funds

SLIAG awards are a temporary source of adult education funds, authorized to help states provide education for legalizing aliens under IRCA. States may use SLIAG education funds to reimburse English-language and citizenship training, literacy training, basic education, GED preparation, educational materials, curriculum development, tutoring and independent study, ancillary services such as child care and transportation, and direct and indirect administrative costs required to implement and administer programs serving eligible legalization applicants up to a cap of $500 per eligible person per year. Vocational education and job training are conspicuously absent from the list of SLIAG-reimbursable programs. That is because the Emergency Immigrant Education Act of 1984, which served as the guide for the SLIAG legislation, is directed at children and focuses primarily on bilingual instruction, not vocational education and job training.

**Table 4.7**

**State ADA Reimbursement per FTE Student, 1990**

| | Los Angeles | Miami |
|---|---|---|
| Adult Schools | $1,585 | $1,766 |
| Community College | | |
| Credit | $3,804 | $2,464–3,582 |
| Noncredit | $1,902 est. | $1,786–2,864 |

NOTE: Information provided by the Los Angeles and Miami adult school and community college systems.

SLIAG regulations require the states to allocate a minimum of 10 percent of their grants to each of three categories—education, health, and public assistance if sufficient need exists. Because amnesty education had a small impact on Miami, the following discussion focuses on Los Angeles. California received the largest SLIAG award, projected at $1.799 billion over five years. Its highest priority for SLIAG funds is medical entitlement programs. Education was allocated 20 percent of the funds, based on the needs of a projected 700,000 eligible amnesty applicants.

The state of California chose to prioritize SLIAG education funds for English-language and citizenship training to insure adequate funds to satisfy amnesty applicants' requirements and to restrict the drain that more extensive education offerings might make on the total SLIAG award (Rolph and Rol[illegible]989). While eventually almost one million people attended amnesty classes in Califor[illegible]was little encouragement to provide more than the 40-hour minimum required by the INCA regulations or to build language fluency in this population. Bureaucratic kinks in the allocation process impeded activity by CBOs, who were sometimes forced to close programs because of the slowness of reimbursement for services (California Post-secondary Education Commission, 1989). Community colleges also entered the process slowly, because reimbursement rates were initially set at the lower adult school level, and because they felt the course guidelines and reporting procedures were unclear. Since their costs were higher than those of the adult schools, the community colleges enlarged classes for amnesty students. During the period from 1987 to 1992, the state ESL/civics adult enrollment was doubled using SLIAG funds. When these funds end in 1992, the state estimates the system will be able to absorb only 15 percent of the students currently supported with SLIAG funds (California Health and Welfare Agency, 1991).

Shrinking federal support imposes an additional burden on immigrant-dense cities. Policymakers in Miami and Florida have been able to articulate their vision for meeting immigrant needs and have brought their concerns to bear in local and state coalitions lobbying for congressional support. In contrast, Los Angeles and California policymakers have not been able to lobby effectively for refugee funds or timely disbursement of amnesty funds. Although federal refugee assistance funds, which include employment training and English-language instruction services, have been cut from 36 months to 12 months, Florida has been able to garner additional targeted funds. The tremendous influx of immigrants into adult education as a result of amnesty English proficiency requirements has opened the door to education, but no further federal funds are planned to insure adequate capacity to meet future needs. Moreover, $1.1 billion of the expected FY 1990, FY 1991 SLIAG grants was

deferred until 1992, further hindering service provision to the amnesty population. State officials do not expect to recover the full amount of deferred funds (California Health and Welfare Agency, 1991).

Austerity budgets in California and Florida create competition over funding priorities. Immigrant vocational needs compete with the health, welfare, and education problems of the states as a whole. In California, there is no effective advocate for immigrant education. Community groups are more concerned with survival questions of legal status and with immigrant civil rights. A civic task force focusing on the Los Angeles workforce does not have as one of its priorities meeting the needs of immigrants, nor does the city have a coordinator for immigrant affairs. The well-established preceding generations of immigrants in Florida are a stronger voice for securing services for immigrants in Miami.

### Tuition Support

Tuition support is an important aspect of education and training funding. Finding tuition funds for adult immigrants is especially problematic, since SLIAG funds may not be used for job training. Federal funds for job training are available under the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) and the new Job Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS) welfare-to-work program, but local implementation by bureaucrats makes it nearly impossible to predict the availability of resources for English-language instruction for adults. Moreover, the required basic-skills admission tests that gatekeep JTPA programs are difficult for persons with limited English skills to pass. But even when they do, other obstacles arise; in contrast to CETA, the previous federal jobs training program, JTPA programs offer no stipend for students taking classes, which makes it difficult to attract immigrants to the classroom training that they frequently need to upgrade their language skills. Moreover, the availability of federal job training funds to eligible legalized persons is questionable, since the targets of federal programs are the long-term unemployed, youth, and the illiterate. While immigrants may meet the criteria for some of these targeted groups, the long-term language instruction needs of many of them are outside the mission of most providers. The federally funded job training programs are not geared to meet the needs of immigrants.

## RESPONSE TO THE IMMIGRANT POPULATION

The generally low level of educational attainment of the amnesty and refugee population is met in both cities by a wide variety of programs. Adult vocational opportunities range from short-term job training focusing on entry level skills, to one-year and two-year career training opportunities. However, for immigrants, the key to program participation lies in opportunities to obtain ESL in conjunction with vocational training. In both cities,

attempts are made in many of these programs to address the critical immigrant issue of limited English proficiency.

Despite the ostensibly hierarchical structure of the postsecondary system meant to serve students at elementary levels in the adult schools and increasingly more advanced training in the occupational centers and community colleges, throughout the system there has been a growing demand for ESL. To meet this need, institutions have modified their traditional missions. Many providers of vocational programs also offer ESL and remedial programs such as Adult Basic Education (literacy through 8th grade), and high school diploma or Graduate Equivalent Degree (GED) programs; some providers locate an adult school on-site so that students can take ESL classes concurrently with vocational classes, others add their own ESL programs. Both Miami and Los Angeles also experiment with adding vocational topics into ESL through Vocational ESL (VESL) classes, which use job-related vocabularies and tasks as the vehicle for teaching English. In both cities, language proficiency is recognized as a job skill by the occupational and skill centers, and language proficiency needs are handled on-site. Miami-Dade community colleges (M-DCC) also include language skills development within the mission of their vocational programs, but the Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD) assigns it a more limited role.

### Language Training and Vocational Education in the Adult School System

**Los Angeles.** The language of instruction for vocational education in Los Angeles is English, increasing the importance of access to English instruction. When Los Angeles adult schools integrate language and vocational training, they particularly emphasize a VESL approach. Currently, about 10 percent of the ESL is taught in VESL classes, and the program is scheduled for expansion in part because VESL can be paid for out of vocational funds. VESL relies on a minimal amount of grammar, provided in lower-level ESL classes, and concentrates on providing technical vocabulary and job-related language skills. VESL courses have the advantage of moving immigrants more quickly into job-related English skills. However, some educators are concerned that this accelerated approach may result in a less solid language foundation in the long run.

The Los Angeles school district provides intensive vocational training in six skill centers and five occupational centers. In immigrant-dense downtown Los Angeles, the school-district skill center, which provides short-term job training for 5000 (courses are a maximum of 600 hours/one semester) in business, food, and electronics, also began providing ESL, high school diploma programs, and basic education classes three and half years ago. Its goal is to place all educational services in one location to better meet the needs of the

community. Students move from ESL to vocational classes as soon as they have a minimum vocabulary, and even first-level ESL students are able to take language and vocational classes simultaneously. Most level 1 teachers are bilingual in Spanish. Students pursuing a high school diploma typically take ESL, otherwise VESL is emphasized. As noted, there are waiting lists for ESL/VESL classes because of the state cap (the current waiting list at this center is 600) and lower-level classes typically have 50 students, while upper level classes have 30–40 students. There are also waiting lists for vocational classes, and this school would expand its offerings to meet an increasing demand for classes if more resources were available.

At the longer-term downtown occupational center (courses to a maximum of 1200 hours/two semesters), serving 12,000 students, a full adult school (serving 6000 students) is also located on-site. ESL was added to the adult school curriculum about seven years ago. Immigrant students with limited English proficiency typically attend six months of ESL before taking vocational classes. With the consent of the instructor, students can take vocational and language classes concurrently. Forty different vocational programs are offered, with reported job placement rates of 60 to 100 percent, depending on the program. The highest placement occurs for computer repair, machine shop, printing, and computer program maintenance. Administrators report that students tend to remain for 75 percent of the length of a program.

**Miami.** Miami's seven short-term training skill centers are run in conjunction with adult school programs primarily providing ESL. ESL in the adult schools is taught using a six-level competency-based curriculum. These skill centers are just beginning to experiment with VESL programs, and Miami vocational classes are frequently taught bilingually in Spanish, putting more emphasis on training skills than English proficiency. The predominance of a Latin American population and the availability of entry-level jobs for limited English speakers seem to account for more acceptance in Miami of bilingual techniques in vocational education. In immigrant-dense locations, 99 percent of vocational enrollees register for ESL concurrently, spending about 1.5 hours of their four-hour school day in an ESL remedial lab.

The Miami school district provides more extensive vocational training in three vocational-technical centers. School district vocational-technical centers provide mid- to high-skilled and career-oriented instructional programs. Of the 6000 students enrolled in the downtown center, only 3 to 5 percent are native U.S. citizens. ESL, GED preparation, and adult basic classes are available. At the center, ESL is moving away from the older model of precollegiate academic emphasis to a more realistic job-oriented VESL approach.

Moreover, in most fields except health, classes are taught bilingually. Teachers try to incorporate advanced technology so that students will be prepared for the job market. Instructors estimate that up to 50 percent of students return for additional vocational or language training after graduation.

**Community-Based Organizations (CBOs).** Another institution modifying its mission is the CBO, recruited by the INS and the state to help meet amnesty education demands. IRCA specifically provides for the inclusion of CBOs in the amnesty process. In California, approximately 30 percent of the people receiving amnesty education were served by CBOs (CASAS, 1989). Many expanded existing programs, and some began providing educational services for the first time. It is unclear whether CBOs will be able to institutionalize these programs and continue to provide services after the federal SLIAG funds end in FY 1992.

### Language and Vocational Training in Community Colleges

**Los Angeles.** In Los Angeles, elementary ESL is viewed by the community colleges as a prerequisite for vocational education and as something to be obtained outside of the community college. In Miami, it is generally considered a vocational skill to be provided through the community college. A special center in Miami is geared particularly to meet the needs of noncitizen students, providing extensive ESL courses and bilingual instruction in vocational courses. A more traditional approach is taken in Los Angeles, where students are encouraged to complete elementary prerequisites at adult schools before enrolling in vocational courses, all of which are taught in English. On an ad hoc basis, some programs foster a more bilingual approach and concurrent VESL and vocational enrollment. For instance, in the global arts and fashion world, an administrator notes that it is "pretty essential to be bilingual." Bilingual students are viewed here as "selling their skills," and English-language skills are less essential.

Long-term (two-year) vocational training occurs at the community colleges. Los Angeles concentrates most of its vocational training at one downtown campus, though all campuses offer vocational certificates as well as two-year Associate of Arts (AA) and Associate of Science (AS) degrees, which meet the academic requirements for transfer to a four-year college or university. The colleges emphasize a traditional transfers mission, though only a small percentage of students actually transfers to a four-year college. Apparently, many students do not persist to graduation because they are able to find employment with only a few semesters of skills instruction. In fact the low transfer rate of community college students has caused the State Master Plan for Higher Education to push

community colleges to implement their missions as transfer institutions much more effectively.

The severe fiscal constraints and declining enrollments have led to the loss of program courses. One campus reported the loss of several job-training programs (e.g., nursing, occupational therapy, dental hygienist, dental assistant). New program development is rarely considered, but in an attempt to make ESL more relevant to occupations, each of the downtown campuses has begun VESL pilot programs. All the Los Angeles college administrators we interviewed expressed the need for offerings and organizational structures more responsive to the surrounding communities. However, they all complained that the will and ability to provide a more responsive, flexible program is lacking because of faculty resistance. According to several administrators, faculty do not want training in ESL methods, or to operate bilingually, or to articulate with adult occupational providers, or to provide more hands-on training. As one administrator put it, "They do not even want to change from typewriters to word processors." These institutional factors affect vocational education as a whole and particularly the response to immigrants.

**Miami.** M-DCC offers one-year certificate programs and two-year degree programs. Also offered are short-term "Standardized Training Opportunity" courses, which are six-month noncredit courses, such as Business Software Applications, much like those offered by the technical and skill centers. State leveling policy[2] has tried to eliminate those courses that duplicate school district offerings, but a grandfather clause has allowed the college to retain 22 such programs. Trying to respond to the demand for short-term training programs, the community college offers classes that are also offered in nearby adult educational technical centers.

As discussed above, three of the campuses provide ESL programs, and a fourth campus, focused on medical careers and located near downtown, has just received a college grant to inaugurate an ESL program. Two lower-level ESL courses were recently added to meet the needs of an increasingly less literate population. The foreign student center at the downtown campus teaches all courses bilingually, teaching in English and summarizing in Spanish. The medical campus teaches some classes in Spanish, but these are generally not the career-level courses, since English is felt to be mandatory for medical career placements.

The Miami-Dade college system has an explicit commitment to serving the needs of immigrant and minority students. ESL and extensive adult education remedial programs, plus short-term training courses, reflect the system's responsiveness to local conditions.

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[2]See the discussion under the subhead "Coordination and Linkages," below.

Administrators voice the need for more short-term training, but are frustrated by state funding that reimburses noncredit offerings at a somewhat lower rate than credit vocational education offerings, making it more costly to offer these expensive courses.

Administrators in both community college systems felt the tension between preparing students for transfer to four-year colleges and occupational certificate programs versus meeting the obvious remedial and training needs indicated by community demographics. One community college administrator sums up the situation by saying, "Community colleges are ideal institutions for meeting the workforce needs of the state and of the nation. But to be ideal, they have to get away from the academic model. They need to provide more streamlined training and need a quicker response."

Miami's community college response has led to duplication of short-term adult vocational education courses and extensive noncredit ESL programs. Los Angeles has resisted impulses to modify its traditional offerings despite declining enrollments. Attrition rates in both community college systems underscore the need to rethink program offerings throughout the training system.

### Attrition

Determining retention in specific courses and through a programmatic sequence of courses is important for institutions in establishing how much capacity they need. But retention data, even for all students, are unavailable for most components of the adult school system, though administrators often assert that immigrants are on a "fast track": "more concerned with achieving job skills [including relevant language competency] than certificates or diplomas."

All we know about ESL retention in the adult schools is that the higher-level courses have fewer students than the beginning levels. For example, in Miami in the 1990–1991 school year there were 35,149 students in beginning ESL, 11,631 in intermediate classes, and 1287 in advanced classes. Whether persistence has to do with immigrants' assessment of the amount of language instruction they need or other factors is unclear because no data are kept on course-taking behavior.

Adult immigrants are typically a working population trying to accommodate school attendance and family responsibilities. The average age of students in the LACC system is 29, and according to administrators and counselors, the majority are working. In Miami over 72 percent of all M-DCC students work full time, almost 65 percent attend on a part-time basis (an increase of 10 percent since 1975), and 42 percent are over 25 years old. In other words, most students in the community college system are supporting their college

educations by working while going to school and stretching out their progress toward degree programs. Given the reported "fast track" needs of many students, and particularly of immigrants, it is not surprising that less than half of all students persist through full degree programs. M-DCC estimates that about one-third of all original entrants graduate. LACCD estimates that one-fourth of all original entrants graduate, and the mean time to graduation is 4.2 years.

Systematic data to identify both optimal program lengths and course-taking behavior would be extremely valuable for systemwide planning and articulation. Respondents repeatedly told us that "students vote with their feet," and that is how they know whether courses are relevant. This gross measure certainly provides useful information, but it does not tell whether students avoid a class because the hours are inconvenient, the subject matter is not perceived as pertinent, the teacher is unacceptable, the relevant labor market is tight, or for other reasons. Administrators were eager to have more data but did not have resources to allocate to research.

M-DCC has studied retention rates for all degree-seeking (about 80 percent of credit students) first-time-in-college students (Losak, 1986). For all full-time students, after four-years 31 percent had graduated and 9 percent were still enrolled in good standing. For part-time students, 11 percent had graduated after four-years, and 11 percent were still enrolled in good standing. In other words, well over half of students do not persist to degrees. The rates of attrition increase as the academic preparedness of students decreases (Losak, 1986), a particularly significant fact for the often poorly prepared immigrant student.

More information about student goals and the goodness of fit between college programs and the goals, skills, and economic and social factors that affect student persistence would help educators shape more appropriate programs.

### Proprietary Schools and Community-Based Organizations

Private and community-based programs are not easily able to provide instruction to adult immigrants with limited English skills because of federal job-placement requirements. Proprietary schools are geared for the native born. They provide job training and compete with community colleges, but they are "for-profit." They subsist on student fees, which are generally arranged through federal student loan programs and are available only to those with legal immigration status. Language and remedial training is often outside the focus of proprietary schools, though they may try to meet students' needs by making available an ESL computer lab or providing help in preparing for GED examinations in extra weekend classes. Irregularities in coursework provision and use of student funds have earned

proprietary schools the reputation of "rip off" organizations (Wilms, 1987; Chicago Sun Times, 1987; Los Angeles Times, 1989).

The schools serving immigrants that we visited reported that they were able to maintain high placement rates because they either selected students who are English proficient or because they established links with organizations to provide concurrent ESL instruction to students. Although administrators acknowledge that many students require better English skills for employment mobility, they have turned to these practices for several reasons. Some are reluctant to offer ESL because they target short-term training and do not believe three to six months of ESL instruction will produce a proficient English communicator. Others explained that accreditation agencies will not permit it. The majority perceive that public schools can adequately handle demand.

Community-based organizations also provide training opportunities. Generally their programs are funded through the federal Jobs Training Partnership Act (JTPA). Often they broker the contract and provide placement services and subcontract with public adult skills centers to provide vocational instruction. Like proprietary schools, CBOs are pressured to meet federal standards requiring job placement rates of 70 percent of students for on-the-job training programs and 60 percent placement for classroom training programs. In order to meet placement requirements, organizations select students most likely to benefit from the programs. As discussed earlier, immigrants have some difficulty meeting admission requirements because of limited English skills.

### Private Employers

Employers seek training through cooperative arrangements with adult schools and community colleges. In Miami these efforts are fostered by the city economic development agency and subsidized by state targeted training funds. Programs are not specifically targeted to immigrants, and typically provide on-the-job training.

We found few instances of employer-school partnerships in Los Angeles. In part this is a result of a state education code requiring that work sites incur insurance costs for holding a public education class, which discourages employers, and the state cap on the adult education system, which limits expansion of all types. We also learned from employers and advocacy groups that employees were reluctant to participate in ESL classes offered at the work site, because either employees did not want to expose their limited English proficiency, did not find the classes convenient, or were served elsewhere. English proficiency is an enabling skill for participation in much of the private and community-based training

opportunities. Federal placement requirements and traditional missions aimed at nonimmigrants impede the provision of ESL requisite for most immigrants.

**Course Prerequisites and Requirements**

Adult schools have no entry prerequisites. They are designed to provide the fundamental skills for further education. They and the occupational centers operate on an "open entry" policy, accepting students as space is available. Entry and exit requirements for vocational classes and in community colleges highlight the importance of proficiency in English.

**Los Angeles.** California community colleges have an "open door" policy and do not require a high school diploma for enrollment, but there is general consensus in Los Angeles that students with limited English ability should develop proficiency through the adult schools before entering college. This notion is formalized in the 1976 Delineation of Functions Agreement referred to in the subsection Enrollments and Capacity above. For courses leading to community college degrees, students must meet English and mathematics prerequisites. These prerequisites may necessitate students taking credit ESL and remedial English and mathematics classes. Through a new matriculation program, all students are assessed at entry. SLEPT (Second Language English Proficiency Test) is used for placement of students with limited English skills. College administrators expect that as data become available from the matriculation assessment, they will document the need for more ESL and remedial courses.

**Miami.** Entry and exit for Miami community colleges is more restricted. For entrance to AA degree programs in M-DCCs, a high school diploma or GED in English is required. A high school diploma is not required for the AS or certificate programs. Florida has a mandated assessment test, Multiple Assessment and Placement Services (MAPS), for all entering community college students. The test covers English, writing, algebra, and computation skills, and is used to determine course placement levels. Students with limited English skills take the Michigan English Placement Test (EPT) to assess placement. Those with poor English skills usually need about six months of ESL before entering the regular program, and many also need six months of remedial math, some of which can be taken concurrently. Two-thirds of M-DCC students are academically deficient at entry and need remedial courses. Students may not take credit courses until they complete the appropriate college-preparatory requirements. Florida students are also required to pass the College Level Academic Skills Test (CLAST), a reading, writing, and computation test, for exit with an AA degree and for admission to the upper division at the state universities. College

officials view CLAST as contributing to the decline in the number of all students completing AA degrees, but particularly minorities. In 1985, three years after the initiation of the test, there was a 43 percent decline in Black test takers and a 35 percent decline in Hispanic test takers presenting themselves for CLAST. In response, administrators recommend broadening the student assessment process to take into account the relationship of students' CLAST scores to their upper-division performance when setting passing scores.[3]

A recent Florida state mandate, responding to employers' complaints about workers' poor reading and communication skills, requires students in vocational programs of 450 hours or more to pass a language and math test before they can receive vocational certificates. District officials report that 52 percent of students pass the language section of the test and 51 percent pass the math section. School administrators had mixed feelings about the appropriateness of the exit skill tests. On the one hand, all agree that career mobility requires English proficiency and that adults restrict their long-run opportunities if they lack it. On the other hand, entry-level jobs in Miami are available for workers with limited English proficiency. Administrators report that students are not as concerned with getting vocational certificates as getting skills which will put them into the labor market quickly. They estimate that as many as 75 percent of students take remedial courses and retake the test, but caution that it depends on how important the certificate is to getting a job. In the health fields (e.g., dental technician), students are very likely to retake the test, whereas in auto mechanics they may be much less likely to do so. There is no comparable state exit requirement in California.

Administrators are caught in a bind between employer demands for increased competencies, state enactment of higher standards, and the struggle to retain students to program completion. Competing priorities are not met with a coordinated systemic response that addresses student needs.

Mixed messages about language objectives are reflected in the fact that state licensing agencies, e.g., for cosmetology, may require that students obtain a vocational certificate in order to sit for the licensing examination (necessitating passing the English exit examination), even though the state license exam itself may be taken in Spanish.

### Financial Assistance and Other Support Services

Support services for immigrants are quite limited. Shrinking resources restrict guidance services, and tuition and fees can be a barrier, particularly at the community college level.

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[3]*Missions and Goals of Miami-Dade Community College*, M-DCC District Administration, 1988.

**Financial assistance.** Public education fees in California are relatively low, though many students still require some financial assistance. In both cities, adult schools are the least expensive education providers. Education for those at 8th grade or below is free. A single adult-school vocational class costs about $10–$12 a semester in Miami, and upper-level ESL classes cost slightly less. Los Angeles adult training centers charge $10 per course per quarter registration plus a class fee averaging $20; fees are waived for most low-income students. Miami charges about $101 per semester for a similar training program. Profits from book sales are used to provide assistance for child care and books for needy students. In neither city are course fees perceived as serious barriers at adult education centers.

At the community colleges, the fee picture is quite different. Tuition and fees in Los Angeles are about $120 annually, but in Florida, state reimbursements to community colleges are lower than in California, requiring much higher tuition costs. In Miami tuition and fees are about $920 annually, creating pressures for tuition assistance.

At M-DCC, 34 percent of credit students receive financial assistance, and 77 percent of that assistance is via grants and scholarships. Loans and jobs make up the rest of student resources. Because most students must work while attending school, Miami administrators assume students will take three to four years to complete a two-year course. The college encourages part-time and full-time employment as an alternative to students incurring heavy loan burdens, and the college maintains an extensive Career and Placement office, with over 400 employers participating in a computerized job bank. Respondents cited limited English-language skills as a barrier, however, for immigrant job placement.

M-DCC has also experienced the persistent problem of providing aid for Nicaraguans. Because the INS has been slow in resolving their asylee status, several thousand Nicaraguan students are ineligible for federal financial assistance programs and rely on M-DCC institutional funds. The college has spent $750,000 over the last six to seven years in assistance to these students.

The majority of students attending proprietary schools finance their education through federal loans paid directly to the schools. A high national loan default rate within the proprietary sector and new federal reporting requirements for job placements constrain programs for the poorest and least-prepared students. An extensive anecdotal literature describes unscrupulous schools taking advantage of students by attracting their loan fees and then not delivering the expected coursework, or by not making it clear to students that they have taken out a loan which must be repaid. The legitimate schools struggle against this unsavory reputation.

**Program information and guidance counseling.** Currently, students may be placed in a program that does not fulfill their needs, and they may not have the program information to know where to go to continue their education. If they do go on, they may have to repeat courses already taken elsewhere or go through complicated processes to prove that they have already met some requirements.

Typically, schools provide little in the way of outreach, and all respondents agree that the primary recruitment technique is word of mouth. Our discussions with students revealed that nearly all learned about their programs this way, with print and radio ads a distant second source of information. Schools will rarely provide information about other schools. One community college teacher described seeing an adult-school flyer angrily trashed by a colleague in front of students. Moreover, students are sometimes not aware of the services that the school does provide, e.g., in job placement. Students in the discussion groups we held were for the most part unaware of job placement services provided by the schools they attend, although over half of those surveyed (52 percent) had indicated a need for assistance with job placement. Students reported frustration at not being informed about school services as well as general information needed to live in the United States. For instance, several students reported being unaware of income tax filing requirements and social security benefits for aging parents until several years after achieving legal status. Schools are aware of their shortcomings in providing information about their own programs or the programs of other providers. Most providers bemoaned their lack of funds for adequate student counseling. As one counselor said, "Immigrant adults, like other adults, make reasonably good decisions about courses and careers once they have the information."

Schools also provide little in the way of guidance to move students between ESL and vocational programs, even within their own site. At M-DCC, for example, amnesty students received no counseling about the regular college program because the college lacks the additional tuition assistance funds these students would need to continue their education. Similarly, LACCD amnesty students received no counseling about further education opportunities either within the community college itself or elsewhere. The Los Angeles school district has begun a PATH program to counsel ESL students into vocational programs, but for many amnesty students this admirable effort began too late. The lack of comprehensive counseling for amnesty students signals a lost opportunity for schools to guide these people into further postsecondary education. It remains to be seen whether they will find their way by themselves.

Several administrators and several students in the focus groups advocated a central clearinghouse for immigrants to provide information about educational opportunities, either

through the Immigration and Naturalization Service or at centers located on school sites. Many students in the focus groups repeated the same phrase—"There is so much to know."

**Job placement and on-the-job training.** Many of the vocational training centers and community colleges we visited had placement services and reported high rates of success in placing students (e.g., over 90 percent placement in the M-DCC medical programs; 80–85 percent at a Los Angeles skills training center). Additionally, or where there are no placement services, a good deal of job placement seems to be done informally by faculty. However, as noted, information about placement services does not seem to be reaching students.

Nearly half of the students we surveyed (45 percent) indicated on an open-ended question about improved services that they desired jobs with a training component. On-the-job training opportunities provided through JTPA or welfare funds target the long-term unemployed, youth, and the illiterate. As noted earlier, the long-term language instruction needs of immigrants are outside the mission of most providers. Admissions staff noted that many immigrants cannot meet the ability-to-benefit testing criteria of these programs. JTPA and JOBS are targeted at the native born and schooled. Because job placement is tied to federal reimbursement of training costs, programs are encouraged to "cream" at admission, selecting students most likely to become employed. Classroom training, when it is offered, is not accompanied by a stipend (as was CETA training), making it a less attractive option to a low-income target group.

### Coordination and Linkages

**Articulation.** The system for educating adults is a composite of autonomous institutions and constituencies, lending itself to a fragmented rather than coordinated response to clients. There is a substantial gap in articulation between education programs. Duplication occurs between course offerings at occupational centers and community colleges, and overlaps occur between upper-level/noncredit and lower-level/credit ESL, both between providers and between programs offered within the community college system.

Matriculating students from noncredit to credit ESL is a particular problem at LACCD. Apparently, amnesty education, providing new resources and teaching staff, fueled ongoing efforts to strengthen the ESL component at campuses. Some took the avenue of building the program within the existing English department (credit ESL), others, who complained that ESL was a stepchild in the English department, sought to build a separate ESL department (noncredit ESL). Establishing a course of study resulted in both a credit and a noncredit program, each offering six courses vertically aligned from beginner to

advanced level. Teachers readily admit that the last two levels of noncredit and the first two of credit ESL coursework cover the same material, but as one explained, "Everyone has their own interest in this thing. That's the way it is in education. Students have to complain if they don't think it's fair." This duplication of curriculum may cost students two semesters of time in ESL and delays in entering credit English courses that gatekeep vocational educational programs. One guidance counselor described the duplication as a "trap for immigrants," while another expressed frustration with "empire building that puts students last. Part of the problem is that faculty still have the 1950s student in the head, they don't want to examine their motives. They don't want to be responsible for messing up adults. So they talk in meetings about mastery and quality of instruction as reasons for doing the things they do." Administrators acknowledge the problem, but are hamstrung by the fact that curriculum is a department and faculty matter.

Although articulation between adult schools and community colleges is a goal of most administrators in both communities, all agree that little coordination exists. As one administrator put it, "There is no will on either side . . . both fear the other will take over." Several factors contribute to the lack of articulation: The vocational training offered by community colleges is very similar to that offered by the long-term occupational centers, but the community colleges add academic training to the vocational program. Respondents indicated that faculty do not respect other segments of the system, and may compete for students. One community college administrator describes faculty attitude as "They're not learning anything over there, it's a waste of time," and an adult school counselor referred to the community colleges as "elitist." Funding further complicates the picture, since each sector wants to retain as many students (and the funding they generate) as possible; for example, occupational centers do not want to lose students and the funding they represent to community colleges, and vice versa. The remediation needs of students also put pressure on providers to expand their missions, thus giving rise to the tremendous noncredit offerings of M-DCC and the foray into noncredit ESL for amnesty students by the Los Angeles community colleges.

Articulation between the long-term training centers and community colleges would particularly make economic sense, because training center students could progress efficiently to advanced education at the community colleges. Meanwhile, enrolling this group as second-year community college students may help offset the extensive second-year attrition experienced by the community colleges.

Miami has made some strides toward more articulation through the Regional Coordinating Council. This body is mandated by state statute for the purpose of coordinating

postsecondary vocational programs offered by county public schools and public community colleges. Besides provider representatives, council membership is 50 percent laypersons appointed by the governor. The council's primary task is to oversee compliance with program "leveling" legislation passed four-years ago.

Leveling is intended to promote a cleaner distinction between short-term postsecondary adult vocational programs (PSAV) and longer, college-based postsecondary vocational programs (PSV). For example, optometric assisting is a short PSAV program teaching fewer skills and considered the turf of public school adult programs, whereas optometric technician is a longer PSV program teaching broader skills and considered the turf of the community college.

The Regional Coordinating Council has the responsibility to make recommendations for program additions, terminations, and revisions. The goal is to avoid duplication. Articulation agreements between the school district and community college permit a student completing a PSAV to obtain advanced placement and or college credit for the PSV program. There is a grandfather clause that permits college programs that were "leveled down" from college credit to be modified to a noncredit offering available through the college. This permits the community college to offer PSAV without going to the council for approval, unless it wants to offer a new program.

We heard mixed evaluations of the council's effectiveness. Some educators view it as a fairly benign body that generally goes along with the most well-prepared and logical presentations. Others see the group as meddlesome and not really attentive to duplication, noting that community colleges took full advantage of the grandfather clause that permitted their substantial re-entry to the PSAV business. Located only two blocks from a public school vocational-technical center, one community college we visited offers 22 PSAV courses for vocational credit; these programs include, for instance, Correctional Officer, Business Software Applications, Insurance Marketing, Optometric Assisting, etc. Some at the community college explain its aggressive move back into PSAV as necessary to meet the needs of public school dropouts, who will otherwise turn to proprietary schools for training. For their part, public school staff did not express concern with community college "duplication," since there was sufficient demand to fill their classes.

**Linkages.** Establishing links among the job training resources in a community increases the ability of the entire system to respond to client needs, though it does not insure that immigrants are targeted. State education codes in California limit coordination of education services between employers and the school district. Employers must become branch sites of schools to offer services, and they thereby incur potential liability for public

access to their sites. Moreover, the adult school must give up a portion of its instructional hours to the employer site because of the cap on expansion, an untenable condition. On the other hand, Florida regulations provide no barriers to this type of collaboration, and Miami's economic development agency established the link between new employers, adult education, and vocational training.

Miami makes efforts to coordinate its job training funds and training resources for adults through the Regional Coordinating Council and the South Florida Employment and Training Consortium. The South Florida Employment and Training Consortium is a superagency that sets policy for, administers, and coordinates multiple job training funds and programs for all Miami-Dade. This means that JTPA, Project Independence, and refugee funds go through the consortium, which also administers Service Delivery Area (SDA) and Private Industry Council (PIC) functions. Notably, the Regional Coordinating Council's director is a member of the consortium staff.

State initiatives have left consortium activities virtually untouched, and the governor has made no move to use his legal prerogative for discretionary funding adjustments of federal JTPA funds. As a result, the usual brokering function of federal and state funds for local job training programs is in the hands of locals themselves (in this case, the consortium).

The consortium has a tradition of promoting on-the-job (OTJ) training in preference to classroom vocational instruction. Approximately 80 percent of its contracts are for OTJ and 20 percent are for classroom vocational training. However, in response to a growing adult population in need of basic skills, primarily recognized in the African American community but also true for many immigrants, the consortium is seeking to increase its efforts in the areas of basic skills, making the shift from OTJ to more classroom instruction.

The SDA is the administrative arm of the consortium. It is SDA practice to subcontract all its services to programs with a known positive track record in previous contract periods. While CBOs have had good success with recruitment and placement for consortium-funded OTJ programs, the public adult schools have reportedly been less successful with the JTPA population that requires vigorous placement efforts. The SDA reports positive experience with the community colleges as successful classroom trainers, and it expects to continue working with community colleges with the shift to classroom training.

Both consortium and county public adult school staff confirm that as a result of past experiences, local public schools are not likely to receive SDA contract awards. But some adult school programs will in fact serve the JTPA population, since several CBOs have taken on the role of prime contractor for job training and then made the link with county public adult schools to actually provide instruction.

The consortium leadership, while acknowledging the needs of immigrants, has determined that the needs of the African American community have long been neglected, and it proposes to make major efforts to boost training and employment for poor African Americans. School district and community college policymakers support this goal.

## 5. ENHANCING SERVICE DELIVERY: THE VIEWS OF ADULT IMMIGRANTS

The voices of immigrant students are rarely heard in studies of the vocational training delivery system. Focus group discussions and a brief survey of immigrant student aspirations and program recommendations were included in this study to provide some qualitative information from immigrant students themselves. This information is not meant to be representative of the total immigrant population. It reflects only the views of students responding to surveys or participating in discussions at those sites we visited. But it does help build a picture of the educational response to immigrant needs.

Despite their diverse education and cultural backgrounds, the nearly 600 adult immigrant students who participated in the study had similar recommendations about enhancing educational programs. They suggested more flexible class times offering all levels of instruction, more language practice, relating English instruction to specific job needs, and providing bilingual support as key components of successful programs. Immigrants' recommendations for improving educational programs reflect their concerns about the practicalities of acquiring further training while already holding down a job, and the central role of English among job skills.

### Flexible Programs

The immigrant population looking for job training is an older, working population and has different needs from the traditional younger students. More than half of those we surveyed report needing classes at different hours, generally morning (21 percent) or evening (23 percent), and almost a third reported needing more basic and advanced classes at different hours.[1] ESL students run into the situation, for example, of VESL classes only being offered in the daytime, with ESL offered at night. Administrators also concur about the need for different hours and add that year-round classes would be especially valuable for this population. As one administrator noted, "Students want skills, not vacations." The adult education centers in both Miami and Los Angeles make evening ESL available, and these are the most heavily attended classes. Los Angeles has more difficulty providing evening vocational training. Respondents report that it is difficult to recruit teachers for evening classes because of the crime near the downtown vocational centers. At the community college, the location problems and the reluctance of teachers to change from

[1]Questions about program recommendations allowed for open-ended responses, and thus the data reports cite the percentage of students who mentioned a topic.

traditional teaching habits also limit the availability of night classes. Miami has an extensive program of evening classes at the technical centers and community colleges. For example, at one technical center, administrators report that 95 percent of students work all day.

One of the difficulties of running year-round programs is financial. Teachers are paid on a ten-month contract, and it would cost the state more to keep the schools open during the summer. Administrators are unlikely to implement program strategies that require additional funds at a time when state funding is uncertain.

Like most working adult students, immigrants are faced with juggling the demands of school, family, and jobs. In focus group discussions they mentioned the difficulties of finding time to study and of transportation systems. These were discussed as everyday frustrations rather than barriers.

### Integrating Language and Vocational Instruction

The movement toward increasing use of VESL in Los Angeles and Miami indicates that providers are aware of the need to integrate ESL directly into vocational training. In our survey of students, over a third of those answering an open-ended question on program improvements recommended language training associated with a job. Pilot VESL programs already occur throughout the Miami vocational education system and the entire Los Angeles adult public education delivery system. In some cases, these programs teach employability skills, such as filling out a job application, and in others the skills are tied directly to an occupation, such as teaching the names of different fabrics and trimmings needed by fashion design students. These pilot programs are tentative beginnings, and they are marked by concerns among some teachers that such instruction skips over the solid grounding in grammar and vocabulary found in a traditional ESL curriculum.

As we have described above, bilingual instruction is much more extensive in Miami. When it occurs in Los Angeles, it is typically on an informal basis among neighboring students.

Students we talked with voiced mixed feelings about whether job training should be taught in English or bilingually. In fact, this issue resulted in prolonged and occasionally heated debate at some sites. The majority said that the better jobs require English. Others mentioned the need for some class explanations in their native language. A few pointed out the impracticality of bilingual instruction, given the variety of languages represented in schools. The general feeling seemed to be that students could benefit from informal bilingual instruction for explanations, but that more conversational English should be encouraged in

class to provide the opportunity for practice and the requisite English-language skills for the marketplace.

The proprietary schools we talked with also expressed concern about the appropriateness of bilingual techniques in the face of English Only laws. Their isolation from other providers inhibits their opportunity to learn about the widespread use of this approach in public adult classrooms.

### Providing Skill Practice

Nearly half of the students that we surveyed reported more need for practice in their classes (49 percent), and many expressed the need for more individual help (29 percent). Practice and individual attention requires small classes so that students have adequate opportunity to develop conversational skills. The large classes so prevalent in adult education make it difficult to offer quality learning opportunities. Interactive computer and tape recorder programs could provide the repeated individualized practice opportunities unavailable in even the most advantageous class settings, but few instances of technological support are evident in the adult schools. Language laboratories are more likely to occur as part of the resource centers of community colleges. We saw little initiative in the public sector to pursue grants to develop technology-supported instruction. We do not know whether this reflects a lack of awareness of the potential resources technology can offer, competing priorities, or hesitation to engage in new styles of teaching.

### Program Quality

Although it was not our intent to measure program quality, our visits revealed remarkable differences in resources available to different providers. Adult schools, with their large classes and limited lab opportunities, are also plagued by shortages of books and materials, and they appear to be the least able to provide quality instruction. Particularly in Miami, we heard frequent complaints about the quality of adult school instruction. Curricular changes alone (e.g., implementation of a competency-based curriculum) cannot be expected to amend the situation; more adequate resources need to be made available for these levels of instruction. The rate of reimbursement for adult education is the lowest in the postsecondary structure, though the teaching tasks are extremely demanding. Respondents indicated that vocational schools suffer particularly from an inability to upgrade their equipment to keep pace with changing workplace technology.

## 6. DISCUSSION

Confronted with the task of integrating an increasing number of adult immigrants from all parts of the world, educators in Miami and Los Angeles are seeking to respond to immigrants' aspirations to learn English and to upgrade their education and job skills. The unique factor in providing education to immigrants is the need to include English instruction. English is the gateway to further instruction, to most job training, and to future job mobility. To date, Miami seems to be in a better position to respond to potential immigrant educational choices, in part because its refugee-based immigrant population was accompanied by a steady flow of federal funds, which allowed the city to establish a stable, well-supported service delivery system. Also, the pattern of the waves of immigrant flows into Miami established the first fairly well-to-do, educated Cuban refugees as an advocacy force for the less-educated, poorer population that followed. Hispanics dominate the Miami community and local government. As new waves of non-Cuban immigrants arrived, the common Hispanic language base and experience of flight from nondemocratic countries unified newer and older immigrants and evoked a solid community commitment to providing services for new immigrants. The lack of a comparable community force for immigrants is apparent in Los Angeles. The large amnesty population—previously illegal, largely with limited education and job skills, and supported only by temporary federal funds—has not established a strong base for educational services. Immigrants, though a large portion of the California population, are not a salient factor on the state agenda, and funds to support their educational and job aspirations are extremely limited. A lack of funding and the political will to move immigrant education higher on the agenda together limit Los Angeles's ability to respond to the growing demand for English and vocational instruction for immigrants.

To address the need for English instruction, Miami and Los Angeles educators have begun to modify existing institutions and to experiment with approaches to integrating vocational education with English. These initial efforts will need to be expanded if immigrants are going to move more effectively through the vocational education system. The limited responses to the changing demographics fueled by immigration arise from a lack of appreciation for both the magnitude of the need and the situation's long-term implications. Educators are also constrained by institutional and regulatory factors. In this section, we elaborate on these two issues. We also identify issues needing further research attention.

## THE DEMOGRAPHIC CHALLENGE

Addressing the issue of vocational education for adult immigrants is particularly important as immigration surges in the closing years of the century. Immigration is accounting for an increasingly large share of the workforce and of new entrants to the workforce, at a time when the workplace is requiring increasingly higher skills. Maintaining our standard of living and ability to compete in a global economy will depend to an important degree on how we respond to the aspirations and needs of this significant share of the population.

Immigration in the closing decades of the century rivals the mass movements of the early 1900s. Immigration in the 1980s (7.3 million) was almost equal to the 1960s and 1970s combined (7.8 million), and illegal immigration, following a brief decrease after the 1986 passage of IRCA, is on the rise again, with 1.2 million apprehensions in 1990 (INS, 1990). The foreign-born now constitute nearly a tenth of the U.S. population, and substantial flows of immigrants are projected to continue into the foreseeable future (Vernez and McCarthy, 1990).

The importance of enhancing immigrant job skills is evident when we consider that immigrants are expected to account for a quarter of the projected growth in the U.S. labor force by the year 2000, (U.S. Department of Labor, 1989), and national projections forecast that less than 2 percent of jobs will fall in the low-skill category, which at present accounts for 15 percent of workers. Moreover, a third of jobs will require skilled labor, and as many as 40 percent will be in professional, managerial, and technical occupations (Silvesti and Lukasiewicz, 1989, referenced in Vernez and McCarthy, 1990). Since immigrants will form a large portion of the workforce, addressing their educational needs is a national concern.

Currently, immigrants' needs for training compete with those of other disadvantaged sectors of the population, e.g., the hard-core unemployed, teenagers, and underprepared minority citizens. Education itself competes with health care and other social services, and it finds itself with limited resources in a time of national fiscal crisis. Campuses face competing demands for their declining resources from varied client groups, sometimes leading to racial and ethnic tensions (Clay, 1989; Institute for the Study of Social Change, 1991; and Vernez and McCarthy, 1990). Yet if immigrant aspirations are limited by the educational community, our national ability to compete and prosper is likewise limited. Moreover, our aging workforce depends on younger workers to maintain social security and health care funds, and low-skilled, low-wage workers impose costs on society in terms of their own health and welfare service needs. Putting the educational needs of immigrants on the front burner increases their economic mobility and thus national potential.

## INSTITUTIONAL AND REGULATORY CONCERNS

### Rethinking Goals and Missions

The current goals and missions of educational institutions are struggling to mesh with the needs of a changing population. Existing institutional goals for education and training support a seemingly efficient approach, differentiating providers for ESL/remedial education, short-term training, medium-length training, and long-term training combined with academic skills. However, the demographic realities are that institutions at each level are serving a population frequently in need of English to pursue vocational objectives as well as remedial English and math skills to pursue academic objectives. This situation creates tensions for institutions trying to implement their missions while serving the needs of their adult immigrant clients.

Rather than restrict people to traditionally constructed paths, educators in both Miami and Los Angeles are relying on existing structures but making attempts to modify the delivery system to treat English as a job skill. ESL has been added to skill centers, adult schools have been located on the sites of occupational centers to provide language and remedial instruction, and in Miami extensive noncredit ESL offerings have been added to the community college curricula. These attempts to respond to the immigrant population have led to competition between sectors for the same students and course duplication. Moreover, more than two-thirds of community college students do not graduate within four years, and significantly for immigrants, the least prepared are the least likely to persist.

As institutions look at modifying their missions, a serious consideration is the presence of large groups of tenured faculty. Given current budgetary constraints, expansion in one programmatic area means reduction in another. But faculty are tenured into departments, thus limiting administrators' options. Restructuring can occur, but it requires comprehensive coordinated planning and priority-setting across the whole institution and perhaps across the whole system.

We suggest that a fresh approach is needed, re-examining both systemwide goals and how the missions of existing institutions can be adjusted to respond to the abilities and aspirations of their clients. The outcome should be a well-coordinated system capable of addressing language and remedial needs in conjunction with vocational training at all levels, and able to move participants between institutions as necessary.

Identifying relevant data and a viable process for accomplishing this type of restructuring effort should be the focus of future research efforts.

### Integrating ESL and Vocational Education

Fundamental to responding to the educational needs of immigrants is regarding ESL as a job skill. Immigrants enter the job-training hierarchy at provider sites that do not necessarily offer instruction that matches their learning needs for English or limited academic proficiencies. English should be seen as a vocational skill that accompanies job training at every level. Miami instructors deal with the integration of English into vocational training in most cases by relying on a bilingual approach, while Los Angeles is experimenting with vocational ESL. This process parallels the recent Perkins Act mandate for the integration of academic and vocational skills. Moreover, ESL and vocational education should not be viewed as a one-time endeavor; minimal skills may be necessary for people to enter the job market and secure a sufficient economic base to allow them to return to upgrade their vocational and academic skills. To provide sufficient English-language instruction within the existing system of adult education, policymakers will need to consider rethinking institutional missions, modifying federal job training and welfare-to-work priorities to take immigrant needs into account, and redefining state education and training priorities to provide more support for the training needs (including ESL) of those not going on to four-year colleges.

### Removing Regulatory Barriers

Regulations pose access problems for adult immigrants. For immigrants seeking tuition assistance for community college or private schooling, the lack of English proficiency will keep them from passing basic skills tests that gatekeep tuition-assistance awards. Federal programs, such as JTPA and JOBS, constitute a large portion of short-term job training; yet federal job training programs do not accommodate the immigrant situation because of language proficiency requirements and different targeting priorities. Whenever there are shortages of ESL classes, this Catch-22 is difficult to solve.

Partnerships between employers and public schools to upgrade worker skills are another option to provide job training. Florida has a statewide program promoting the link between employers and adult schools and community colleges. Although employers and schools are making links in Los Angeles, state educational codes stand in the way of subsidized assistance. The place of public funding for worksite education is another question that requires wider study, including questions of who benefits from the training (e.g., is it targeted to management or lower-level employees?), how training fits into the workday (is it part of the regular work hours or an add-on requirement?), and what conditions are placed

on participating workers. Before encouraging these partnerships, we would suggest that worksite training practices require further investigation.

### Expanding Funding

Funding strategies reflect the low priority of adult education. Although the demands for English instruction and one-year occupational programs are immediate and substantial, major funding hurdles point to a dismal future. At issue is federal policy for immigrants, state policy toward adult education, and the entire question of how adult and postsecondary education should be funded.

Although immigrants generally arrive in a community as a result of federal policy decisions, providing services for them is increasingly left to local community resources. Federal refugee-targeted assistance is scheduled for further reduction at the same time that the appropriation for SLIAG funds ends. Constriction of federal funds is particularly difficult for states and urban magnet communities—such as California and Florida—that are already functioning under austerity budgets. In such an economic climate, funding priorities for adult immigrants' education have limited support. California's reluctance to fund expansion of adult programs is reflected in a long-term cap on reimbursement for adult education.

Florida has experienced some success in focusing federal dollars on its efforts for immigrants. Building a coalition of local and state policymakers and agencies representing education and human-services providers to arm its congressional delegation with data on immigration efforts, Florida has brought in additional funds and congressional attention. Policymakers in Miami and Florida easily articulate their vision for meeting immigrant needs.

This is in sharp contrast to our observations in Los Angeles and California, where the majority of policymakers have not yet constructed a vision for the integration of immigrant newcomers into their organizational plans. Essentially, immigrants and immigration are a fringe concern on the periphery of school organization in California. The educational and job training needs of adult immigrants was not a salient issue for most local or state policymakers. For example, there was no coordination between economic planners and educators at the policy level, and there was little practical recognition of new demographic realities in the context of immigration, learning needs, working skills, and the local economy. Unlike Miami, there was no organized constituency to exert pressure on Congress for increased resources.

An additional issue that should be raised in conjunction with expanding state funding for adults is the entire system of reimbursements. In California, for example, the state

reimburses universities on the order of $12,000/FTE, state colleges receive about $7,000/FTE, and community colleges receive about $3,000/FTE. Yet the first two years of community college studies can satisfy state college or university requirements, and as one community college administrator complained, their students have "the most need—they are low income, disadvantaged, non-English-speaking, and less career goal oriented." Perhaps our entire way of thinking about levels of funding for various components of the educational system needs to be re-examined, particularly in a period of declining budgets for higher education. RAND researchers are beginning to initiate just such a research effort, which will include a comprehensive analysis of the funding strategy for the entire system of education and how it might be changed to improve education for all Americans.

### Collecting Information for Planning

As much of the previous discussion indicates, many of the problems facing the education of adults are endemic to the system and are merely exacerbated for immigrants by their English-language deficiency. Questions of rethinking institutional missions in the face of changing demographics, integrating vocational and academic skills, increasing access, and establishing adequate funding are problems that confront the entire adult educational system, and should properly be addressed in terms of the entire system. To conduct this type of investigation, educators and policymakers will need more information about such areas as course-taking behavior, retention rates, tracking of subsequent education, job placements, job retention, and institutional costs. We will want to answer questions such as:

- What are the patterns in student use of the system, including adult schools, training centers, community colleges, and nonpublic providers? How, when, and why do they move between components?
- How long do students persist in particular courses or course sequences? Which courses have a high or low priority for students?
- What remedial services are required for students to be successful at each level of the system?
- How well does education and training match worksite needs?
- How cost-effective are different components of the system?

Our inquiry into the response of two communities to the growing educational demands of immigrants has unlocked questions about the functioning of our entire adult education and training system. Meeting the educational needs of a changing population is a local, state, and national activity. How we invest in our national workforce dictates in great part

the economic and civic viability of communities and, thus, the quality of life for all Americans.

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